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THE

HISTORY OF NAPOLEON I

LANFREY

THE HISTORY

OF

NAPOLEON THE FIRST

BY

P. LANFREY

IN FOUR VOLUMES.—VOL. III.

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CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	INCORPORATION OF GENOA—NEW COALITION —CHECK OF THE INVINCIBLE ARMADA OF BOULOGNE, 1805	1
II.	CAPITULATION OF ULM — NAPOLEON AT VIENNA, 1805	28
III.	TRAFALGAR—AUSTERLITZ, 1805 . .	65
IV.	THE TREATY OF PRESBURG—THE EMPIRE AND THE VASSAL KINGDOMS—THE CONFEDERATION OF THE RHINE—INTERNAL SITUATION —RUPTURE WITH PRUSSIA, 1805, 1806 .	95
V.	JENA—THE DECREE OF BERLIN, 1806 .	150
VI.	NAPOLEON AND POLAND — CAMPAIGNS OF PULTUSK AND EYLAU, 1806, 1807 .	186
VII.	SHAM NEGOTIATIONS — THE INACTION AT OSTERODE AND AT FINKENSTEIN, 1807 .	232
VIII.	CAMPAIGN OF FRIEDLAND — INTERVIEW OF TILSIT, 1807	257

CHAP. PAGE

IX. The Policy of Tilsit — Conquest and Oppression of the Neutral States— Origin of the War with Spain, 1807 . 284

X. Institution of Titles of Nobility and Suppression of the Tribunate, 1807 . 315

XI. The Plot of the Escurial — Junot in Portugal, and Napoleon in Italy, 1807, 1808 337

XII. The Revolution at Aranjuez — The Treachery of Bayonne, 1808 . . 362

XIII. The Insurrection in Spain—Arrival of King Joseph, 1808 . . . 408

XIV. Capitulations of Baylen and Cintra—The French Retreat to the Ebro, 1808 . 434

XV. Europe after Baylen—The Interview at Erfurt, 1808 465

This Translation has been made with the sanction of the Author.

THE

HISTORY OF NAPOLEON

CHAPTER I

INCORPORATION OF GENOA—NEW COALITION—CHECK OF THE INVINCIBLE ARMADA OF BOULOGNE

NAPOLEON had left Paris almost at the same time as the Pope, that is to say, towards the end of March 1805, to go into Italy, where everything was ready for his coronation. His first intention had been to give this throne to his brother Joseph, for he was quite aware of the discontent and uneasiness which this fresh increase of power would give rise to in Europe. He had even informed the king of Prussia and the emperor of Austria of the coming accession of his brother, disposing of Joseph without his assent, and imagining that these sovereigns would be only too happy to see him abandon to an agent what he could so easily have taken for himself. He went so far as to tell the emperor of Austria 'that he had sacrificed his own greatness and weakened his power, but that he should be amply rewarded if, by so doing, he had *given him pleasure!*'[1] It is very doubtful whether the Emperor François was as much charmed as his good brother tried to believe; but what was more unexpected was that Joseph, who had not been consulted, would not accept the present that was

[1] Napoleon to the emperor of Austria, January 1, 1805.

offered him. He obstinately refused to be king of Italy, for the reason that he would not give up *his rights to the crown of France*, so quickly had the assumption of rights appeared in this family of strangers, but yesterday so obscure and so destitute! Napoleon, disappointed, then tried to dispose of this throne in favour of Louis's eldest son, charging the father to govern till the majority of the prince. But Louis refused still more resolutely than his brother, alleging, 'that so marked a favour would give fresh credit to the reports that were circulated about this child;' to which Napoleon replied by taking him by the shoulders and thrusting him out of his cabinet.[1] It did not require more to make him decide on proclaiming himself, and this is what he resolved to do, announcing to the emperor of Austria, in justification of this new change, 'that the government of the Italian Republic had thought that so long as there were Russian troops in Corfu, and English troops in Malta, this separation of the crowns of France and Italy would be quite illusory,'[2] but that this separation would take place as soon as England had evacuated Malta, and Russia Corfu. Such deference for the opinion of the government of the Italian Republic could not fail to please the emperor of Austria, and the promise that was made him ought, it was thought, to completely reassure him.

Napoleon's journey into Italy had another aim besides his coronation; he wished to divert Europe from the expedition of Boulogne, which more than ever absorbed all his thoughts. It is probably to a reason of the same kind that we may attribute the pacific demonstrations to which he gave himself up, during the months of January and February 1805, with an unusual prodigality of philanthropy and grand sentiments. They were inaugurated by a letter to the king of England, written in the same style as the one at the commencement of the Consulate, but which failed to produce any effect upon the public. 'His conscience reproached him for so much blood uselessly shed. . . . He entreated his Majesty not to refuse himself the

[1] *Mémoires* de Miot de Mélito.

[2] Napoleon to the emperor of Austria, March 17.

happiness of giving peace to the world, not to leave this sweet satisfaction to his children! . . . It was time to silence passions, and only listen to the voice of humanity and reason. . . . As for himself, in expressing these sentiments he performed a duty sacred and precious to his heart!'[1] Napoleon had obtained so much success in France by playing with words,—he had so many times seen declarations, which were flagrant contradictions to his acts, received with an invariable credulity, that he had become lavish of them beyond all limit, and was ready to believe that this means would succeed with him at all times and in all places. After having so often broken faith, he again offered his word as an assured pledge of his intentions. It was to bind everybody, except himself! After his letter to the king of England, it was henceforth understood that he had no ambition, and only lived for peace. He hastened to call upon the Legislative Body to witness his abnegnation and his disinterestedness: 'He had sacrificed the most legitimate indignation . . . he placed his glory, his happiness, in the happiness of the present generation. He wished the century to be characterised by the reign of philanthropic and generous ideas.'[2] He endeavoured to draw the same advantage from his measures with the European Cabinets, who were more difficult to persuade. 'The steps that I have taken with the English Government,' he wrote to the Prince of the Peace, 'will no doubt have convinced his Catholic Majesty *that I have no other aim than the interest and happiness of the present generation.*'[3] The demonstration was, in fact, conclusive, and it had cost but little. Who could henceforward doubt the intentions of this misunderstood philanthropist?

This kind of pacific *fantasia* was followed by a grand orchestral piece, executed before the Senate and the members of the Italian Consulta, whom Napoleon had engaged to come and offer him the crown of Italy. In this address

[1] Napoleon to the king of England, January 2, 1805; *Moniteur* of February 5.

[2] *Speech to the Legislative Body*, February 10, 1805.

[3] Napoleon to the Prince of the Peace, February 19.

he chiefly studied to point out the *extreme moderation that had marked all his political transactions.* We had conquered Holland, Switzerland, and three-fourths of Germany; the partition of Poland, and the conquest of India, which had disturbed the European balance of power to our injury, gave us the right to keep these provinces. Nevertheless, we had restored them. Holland and Switzerland *were independent.* The princes of Germany *had more magnificence and splendour* than their ancestors had ever had.

The annexation of the territory of the Italian Republic would have been advantageous and useful to us; nevertheless, we had also proclaimed *its independence at Lyons;* 'we were this day doing still more,—we were proclaiming the *principle of the separation of the crowns of France and Italy!* The Genius of Evil,' he continued, 'will in vain seek for pretexts for rekindling war upon the Continent; *no new province will be incorporated with the Empire.*'

The European powers were thus warned. Instead of having the right to complain of us for having infringed the treaties of Lunéville and Amiens, they owed us deep gratitude for having deigned to leave them something. As for their grievances with regard to Holland and Switzerland, they were idle dreams; these annexations to the French Empire had never ceased to be independent! In short, the creation of the kingdom of Italy, instead of being a subject of alarm, was a fresh benefit. If we are to judge of the sincerity of the solemn promise which terminated the Imperial address by the sincerity of these declarations, we must admit that the European Cabinets had good reason to mistrust such language; and this was in reality the only impression it produced. Each day brought them fresh reasons for uniting against us. They had not recovered from their surprise about the Italian royalty, when they heard of the semi-monarchical transformation of Holland, for the benefit of M. Schimmelpenninck, the creature and instrument of Napoleon, who, under the title of 'grand pensionary of Holland,' was in reality only the pensionary of France. These events rendered the task easier for our enemies. While Napoleon was triumphantly journeying

towards Milan, to place the crown of the Lombard kings upon his head, amid the acclamations of a people whom the magic words, incessantly repeated, of '*patrie Italienne*,' had momentarily caused to forget the humiliations of the foreign yoke, Pitt and the Emperor Alexander were putting the finishing stroke to the patient and difficult work which they had undertaken together. They drew up, after long negotiations, the treaty of alliance which was to reconstruct the European coalition.

As early as November 6, 1804, Austria had signed a secret treaty with Russia, of a strictly defensive character, similar to that which Alexander had already concluded with the king of Prussia. This treaty only bound Austria, in case the *status quo* should be disturbed, either in Italy or in the States of the Ottoman Empire, by fresh invasions of France. It shows how peaceable were the dispositions of this power, for it was not grievances that were wanting to induce her to make war on us. This result was too insignificant to satisfy Alexander. Under the influence of the ideas, at once ambitious and philanthropic, to which his ephemeral office of arbiter of Europe had given birth, encouraged, moreover, by the young men, full of generous illusions, who directed Russian policy, this prince had conceived magnificent plans, in which the imagination of the mystic friend of Madame de Krudner revealed itself long beforehand. His aim was not merely to repress the encroachments of France, but definitely to insure the happiness and regeneration of the European States, by a more equitable distribution of territories and the adoption of a public law sanctioned by all the Powers.

Alexander's plan was brought to England by M. de Nowosiltzoff, one of the most zealous of these apostles of the cause of humanity, who arrived in London at the beginning of the year 1805. Pitt listened attentively to the explanation of this diplomatic idyll, decorated with the name of *Mediatory Alliance*, and then pointed out to the young ambassador the propriety of postponing for a time the question of the felicity of the human race, and only considering for the present what was necessary and possible.

To balk Napoleon's ambition, and to create barriers strong enough to keep it henceforth within just limits, seemed to him sufficient work for the time. All the other objects were, he thought, secondary compared to this one; they would only create difficulties that, to say the least, were unseasonable. When once this great end was attained, it would be time enough to discuss the utopias of Alexander. He accordingly set aside all the innovations of the Russian plan, and retained little more than the stipulations which had formed the basis of the programmes of Lunéville and Amiens. By the terms of the treaty, signed at St. Petersburg, the 11th of April 1805, by M. de Nowosiltzoff and Lord Leveson Gower, the two contracting Powers engaged to aid in the formation of a great European league, destined to insure the evacuation of Hanover and the North of Germany, the effective independence of Holland and Switzerland, the re-establishment of the king of Piedmont, the consolidation of the kingdom of Naples, and the complete evacuation of Italy, including the island of Elba. A special article stipulated that they were not to intermeddle with the internal government of France, that they were not to appropriate to themselves any conquest, and that, at the end of the war, a general congress should settle the situation of Europe. England having refused to promise the evacuation of Malta, the Emperor Alexander would only sign this treaty conditionally. He postponed the ratification, and moreover reserved to himself the right of making fresh overtures of mediation to Napoleon, in order to avoid war; he expected to produce a great effect by this arbitration, proposed in the name of all Europe; he was, in fact, sure of seeing all the Powers, except Prussia, ranged around him. His envoy, Winzengerode, had vainly endeavoured to draw this hesitating and versatile power, who wanted to please every one at once. She flattered herself that she could again grow rich without risking anything, and did not feel the necessity of pronouncing, till this course could no longer be other than fatal to her. Winzengerode was more successful with Austria, who, after some tergiversations, yielded in principle, on the news of the changes that had

taken place in Italy, with the understanding that she should afterwards discuss with her allies, and particularly with England, the great financier of the coalition, the conditions of her acquiescence in the treaty. They were certain beforehand of the concurrence of Sweden and Naples, and they entertained a hope of obtaining the adhesion of Prussia at the last moment, by intimidating her with a threatening demonstration on her frontier.

Every preparation was thus being made for the renewal of a European coalition against France. Notwithstanding the closeness of the negotiations, the secret was known to everybody, so logical and rational did the thing appear. Napoleon, who caused the report to be contradicted in his journals, knew better than any one how well founded it was; his enemies themselves had taken care to acquaint him with it, as if they wanted to warn him before they struck. As early as the month of January 1805, in the note addressed to Napoleon, in reply to his letter to the king of England, the English Cabinet informed him that they were in communication with the principal powers of the Continent, and 'particularly with the emperor of Russia, with whom they were connected by confidential relations.'[1] A number of signs, the comings and goings of extraordinary envoys between one capital and another, the opinion of our diplomatists, the reports of foreign newspapers, and the unusual movements of troops, had confirmed the truth of this assertion. However, though the project was far advanced, nothing was yet irremediable. Austria, the first exposed to the blows of Napoleon, and half-ruined by the preceding campaigns, had joined the coalition with extreme repugnance, and had not yet signed anything. Prussia was firm in her indecision, and, if she had been forced to pronounce at any price, she would rather have inclined towards us. Skilfully managed by our policy, this power could hold the Continent in check; and Alexander himself was not irrevocably bound. Nettled by the disdain with which Pitt had treated his plans of European regeneration, he would have been delighted to take his revenge by solving diplomatically the difficulties

[1] Lord Mulgrave to Talleyrand, January 14, 1805.

that Pitt wished to settle by war. The Czar had resolved to make us great concessions in order to attain this end, and had alone insisted on a fresh effort being made with Napoleon in favour of peace. In this attempt he employed that same M. de Nowosiltzoff, who was the confidant of all his thoughts, and he showed the most conciliating dispositions. Taking advantage of the fact that there was nothing definite in his engagements with England, he offered Napoleon much better conditions than those of the treaty. Nowosiltzoff received instructions to maintain inviolably the evacuation of Hanover and Naples, and the independence of Switzerland and Holland, but he was authorised to give us a larger portion of Italy than we had a right to claim, for Alexander consented to leave things in their actual state, with this exception, that the king of Sardinia should receive Parma and Piacenza as indemnities for Piedmont, and that the kingdom of Italy should be given to a prince of the House of Bonaparte. Moreover, the negotiator, animated by the supple and insinuating spirit of his master, was to treat Napoleon with the most delicate consideration, and carefully avoid everything that might wound his susceptibility; he had orders not even to make an allusion that would imply the participation of England or Austria in the step taken by Alexander. M. de Nowosiltzoff set off for Berlin, where he was to ask for passports from the Prussian Government, in consequence of the rupture of our diplomatic relations with Russia, and towards the end of the month of May 1805 Napoleon received at Milan a letter from the king of Prussia, informing him of the mission of Alexander's representative.

How different were his dispositions from those they expected! When we read his reply to the king of Prussia, and Talleyrand's note which accompanied it, we ask ourselves if he had not a fixed determination to drive Europe into war by dint of defiance and provocation. He did not, it is true, refuse the passports demanded for Nowosiltzoff, but he would not be able to receive him before July, that is to say, more than two months later! Two months' delay at so critical a moment, when hours

counted for days! And in the interval he was about to do things that would render all conciliation impossible. 'He did not expect anything from the mediation,' he wrote to the king of Prussia; 'Alexander was too weak and uncertain;' he 'did not hope for anything good for the general peace. . . . My brother,' he added, 'I wish for peace. . . . *I have no ambition;* I have twice evacuated the third of Europe, without being compelled. I only owe Russia on the affairs of Italy the same account that she owes me on those of Turkey and Persia. All peace with England, to be solid, ought to contain a clause stipulating that she will cease to give asylum to the Bourbons and the emigrants, and that she will restrict her miserable writers!'[1] These words were not encouraging to the negotiators. A historian has written, that in the event of a solid peace Napoleon would have had no objection to evacuate Hanover, Naples, Holland, and even Switzerland; and thus far he made no serious difficulties.[2] His correspondence, however, proves that he had no idea of yielding on any of these points, except for Hanover; and even at the last moment, when he had so great an interest in drawing in Prussia, he forbade Talleyrand to make any engagement with this power with regard to *Holland, Switzerland, and the States of Naples.*[3]

The letter from the king of Prussia surprised him in the midst of anxieties which scarcely resembled the disinterestedness that he sometimes chose to affect. Since he had assumed the title of king of Italy, the temptation, already very ancient, of making things agree with words, and laying hands on the whole of the Peninsula, had taken an irresistible hold on his mind. Nothing appeared easier than this last change, owing to the apparent resignation of Europe, and all that he had already done to prepare for it. The States, still independent in name, that existed in Italy, were in reality completely held at his discretion. Genoa, Lucca, Etruria, had no longer even the semblance of autonomy; as for the kingdom of Naples, he was occupying a

[1] Napoleon to the king of Prussia, May 9, 1805.
[2] Thiers: *History of the Consulate and the Empire.*
[3] Napoleon to Talleyrand, August 22, 1805.

part of it with his troops, and a breath would have sufficed to make this monarchy disappear. According to his constant method with the states that he wished to ruin, he incessantly intermeddled in the internal affairs of this kingdom, pretended to discover each day fresh plots against his army, to attribute to the queen's influence, for example, the despatch of Russian troops to Corfu; he made a parade of his grievances, blamed, advised, and threatened by turns. Pretexts were, moreover, not wanting. Supposing the Court of Naples to have been favourably disposed towards us, it was impossible for her not to see with displeasure our troops in the heart of her provinces, the taxes that we deducted from her exhausted treasury, the increasingly menacing aspect of our domination in Italy; but, too powerless to act, she made use of the arm of the weak—intrigue, and beset the cabinets of Europe with her complaints. There was nothing astonishing in this, nor was there anything new in her conduct; but Napoleon, who for a long time had had designs on the kingdom of Naples, did not content himself with noticing these acts of imprudence; he took pleasure in provoking them by the harshness of his language. He informed the Court of Naples of his will, by assuming the tone and rights of the most imperious master. 'Let your Majesty listen to this prophecy,' he wrote to the queen of Naples, January 2, 1805; 'at the first war of which she is the cause, she and her posterity will have ceased to reign; *her wandering children will beg help from their relatives in the different countries of Europe.* By her inexplicable conduct, she will have caused the ruin of her family, while Providence and my moderation have preserved it!' And he concluded this singular complimentary letter by informing the queen of Naples of the conditions that seemed to him suitable to prevent the fulfilment of this dark prophecy: the removal of the minister Acton, the expulsion of Elliott, the English ambassador, and the French emigrants, the recall of the Neapolitan ambassador at St. Petersburg, the disbanding of the militia, and lastly, the adoption of a system of *confidence*, that is to say, of complete subjection to France. On these conditions

the queen of Naples might still save her kingdom; this was in reality equivalent to placing it absolutely in the hands of Napoleon, who would no longer have had any reason to take it.

Hitherto, however, he had been restrained by the fear of irritating the Powers, and had done nothing more, so to speak, than prepare, for a time more or less distant, the *grounds* for a complete annexation of the Italian States to the French Empire; but when he found himself upon this first theatre of his glory, in the midst of a population at once so docile and so enthusiastic, the intoxication of power and ambition soon outweighed the inspirations of prudence. He was not a man to form illusions with regard to the strength of the feelings displayed towards him; but the wonder, the admiration, the immense curiosity of which he was the object, had always the effect of exciting in him that desire to astonish and dazzle by which he was consumed. The good Italians no longer found him the modest and reserved general of austere mien and sententious and laconic language, whom they had known at the head of the republican army. How much times were changed! The part had been thrown off like the costume; the garment borrowed from Plutarch had been cast to the winds, and the man now showed himself without constraint in his true character, imperious, intemperate, anxious, unreasonable, talking with extreme volubility, deriding with imperturbable assurance questions of which he knew nothing, dogmatising on medicine, painting and music,[1] displaying in short an ostentation of bad taste amid some rough returns to simplicity,—a truly theatrical personage, incessantly aiming at effect. We see him on the plains of Marengo, in the uniform and hat that he had worn on the day of battle, giving his troops a grand representation of this famous victory. He had sent to Paris for these old-fashioned things in order to strike the minds of the soldiers more vividly; but their disinterment only produced astonishment. He afterwards awarded to himself triumphal honours, by defiling under a magnificent arch erected at

[1] Carlo Botta: *Storia d'Italia dal* 1789 *al* 1814.

the gate of Alessandria. The coronation festivities at Milan surpassed in splendour anything that contemporaries had seen of this kind. He took advantage of the circumstance to exchange the cordon of the Legion of Honour with those of orders of the principal sovereigns in Europe, a ceremony which was to prove decisively that the Empire was on a level with the oldest monarchies.

In the midst of this grand display of power, and the complaisant orations of the Italians, Napoleon quickly forgot the engagements that he had twice made in the course of this same year by declaring '*that no new province would be incorporated in the Empire.*' It was scarcely two months since this declaration had resounded through the halls of the Senate; he had explicitly renewed it in his private letters to the sovereigns; and now all Europe was about to be informed at the same time of the incorporation of the Republic of Genoa, and the creation of the Principality of Lucca and Piombino for Bacciochi, the husband of Elisa. He made this transformation without consulting anybody, and it was not known till it was achieved. These two republics had been completely under our influence, but their fate had not been definitely settled; and the more dependent their situation, the more impolitic it was to touch it, and run such great risks for a mere change of words. This change of words was in reality grave; it clearly said that with Napoleon there could be neither confidence, nor security, nor sworn faith. He endeavoured to cloak the fresh encroachment under zeal for the principles of maritime right, trodden under foot by England, and his respect for 'the *liberal ideas* in which the English refused to co-operate.'[1] He ostentatiously caused volumes of signatures to be presented to him,—signatures that were either fictitious or extorted, by which the Genoese were supposed to demand the union of their country to France; but no one was the dupe of this gross falsehood, so many times repeated, and the effect was irremediable. At the same time, every one could see that he was preparing a

[1] Address to the Deputation of the Senate and People of Genoa, June 4, 1805.

surprise for the kingdom of Naples, similar to that which had just fallen on Genoa. The queen having sent the Prince de Cardito to Milan, with the title of envoy extraordinary, not to protest against the title of king of Italy, as has been said, but to congratulate him on his new dignity, Napoleon violently attacked him in the audience: 'Tell your queen,' he exclaimed, 'that I know of her intrigues, and that her children will curse her memory; for I will not leave her enough land in her kingdom to build her tomb.'[1] To this threat he added the most insulting names for the queen; the Prince de Cardito fainted, and the astounded bystanders recognised in these words the sentence of the royal house of Naples, though events forced him to defer for a time the carrying out of the threat.

The news of the annexation of Genoa, of the transformation of the Republic of Lucca into a Principality, of the insult offered to the envoy of the queen of Naples, certain omen of the speedy downfall of a house that was so closely connected with that of Austria, rendered M. Nowosiltzoff's mission useless. This diplomatist received orders to return to St. Petersburg; and, after that, the war was only a question of time. Austria began to arm with all the activity that the necessity of secrecy and the proximity of so formidable an enemy permitted; Russia ratified the treaty that bound her to England, without insisting upon the evacuation of Malta, and all began to discuss the plan of campaign. Thus the European powers, who, at the time of our rupture with England, were either favourably disposed towards us or firmly resolved to preserve their neutrality, had been led reluctantly and by degrees to take part in this struggle, by a series of acts which were the work of Bonaparte alone, and of which the commonest foresight would have been able to ward off the peril. The occupation of Hanover, the violation of the territory of Baden, the murder of the Duc d'Enghien, the proclamation of the Empire of the West, the violation of the territory of Hamburg, the seizure of the English minister, the proclamation of the kingdom of Italy, the incorporation of Genoa and Lucca, were

[1] Pietro Colletta: *Storia del reame di Napoli.*

so many threatening enterprises that nothing demanded, that had only been undertaken through the torment of a restless ambition, and that could only lead to a coalition. This result appeared so inevitable, even to the least clear-sighted, that as early as the month of May 1805, the treaty of the 11th of April, between Russia and England, was almost universally known. It was proclaimed by public report, which exasperated Napoleon; for public report ought only to publish news that it suited him to spread; and if this messenger had not been beyond his reach, he would probably have prosecuted it as factious. 'Monsieur Fouché,' he wrote to his Minister of Police, in reference to these reports of an alliance, 'get several letters published in the papers *as coming from St. Petersburg*, and asserting that the French are better treated there; that the court and the town feel the necessity of drawing nearer together; that, in short, the English are looked upon coldly; *that the plan of the coalition has failed;* that, at all events, Russia will intermeddle with nothing.'[1] His confidants, and even his nearest relations, were to be, or to appear to be, deceived like the general public, until the day when it should suit him to allow the truth to be known; for it was requisite to have a blind faith in himself, and he did not admit the supposition that any event whatever could happen without his special permission. 'Monsieur my brother-in-law and cousin,' he wrote the same day to Murat, 'what you have written me about the conclusion of a treaty of alliance between England and Russia *is nonsense; it is perfectly false.* The reports that the English are spreading, in order to get out of their difficulties, are inventions.'[2]

The better to gain credit for this opinion, he purposely prolonged his stay in Italy in apparent idleness; but he was in reality diligently watching the arming of Austria. Meanwhile he was more than ever occupied with his project of a descent upon England, which his calculated departure rendered more improbable. He flattered himself that he should be able at the last moment to act with such lightning-

[1] Napoleon to Fouché, May 26, 1805.
[2] Napoleon to Murat, May 26.

like rapidity, that the coalition would be broken up before it had had time to concentrate its armies. In this way he passed the whole of the month of June, ostensibly absorbed by the organisation of the new kingdom, and by the splendid festivities that the cities of Italy were giving to celebrate the accession of the heroic liberator. But when the month of July came, he thought it was time to get nearer to the spot which he had chosen for the theatre of the grand duel in which France and England were about to engage. He accordingly quitted Italy suddenly, and in a few days travelled from Turin to Fontainebleau. He left Prince Eugène at Milan, to govern under the title of viceroy. The prince received, with the decree which delegated this authority to him, some very characteristic instructions. Mixed up with wise and sensible recommendations, suggested by his experience in affairs and knowledge of men, we read these significant words, in which Napoleon wholly revealed himself: 'My subjects in Italy are naturally more deceitful than the French citizens. You have only one means of maintaining their esteem, that is, not to give your entire confidence to any one. . . . *When you have spoken from your heart and without necessity, say to yourself that you have committed a fault, into which you will never fall again. Show for the nation that you govern an esteem that it is more requisite to manifest in proportion as you discover motives for esteeming it less.* A time will come when you will recognise that there is very little difference between one people and another.'[1]

During Napoleon's stay in Italy the preliminary operations of the gigantic naval campaign had been accomplished with incomplete success, but still sufficient to keep alive his hopes. Admiral Villeneuve had sailed from Toulon, the 30th of March, with twelve vessels and six frigates, again escaping Nelson who was waiting for him between the coasts of Sardinia and Africa. He had first touched at Carthagena, then at Cadiz, where he had joined Admiral Gravina, but with vessels infinitely inferior in number and quality to what had been announced. Out of the sixteen

[1] Napoleon to Prince Eugène, June 7, 1805.

vessels of the Spanish navy he had only been able to take six, and even of these he was obliged to leave more than half on the way. From thence he passed without accident through the Straits of Gibraltar, and sailed for the West Indies. On the 13th of May he anchored off Martinique, after a long and difficult voyage, during which he had been obliged to use some of his vessels to tow the others. He now found himself at the head of eighteen vessels and seven frigates, owing to the arrival of the late ships; but he had failed Missiessy, who was at that very time on his way back to France. Nelson knew by the 16th of April the direction that our squadron had taken; but, detained by contrary winds, he had not been able to appear before Gibraltar till the 7th of May; there only he learned for a certainty what Villeneuve's destination was. The necessity of convoying the transports kept him back a few days longer, and the 13th of May, at the time that Villeneuve was setting sail from Martinique, Nelson set out in his pursuit with only eleven vessels, not hesitating to go and seek, in this vast sea, an enemy who possessed double his forces, who was a month in advance of him, and whose precise position he did not know.

Villeneuve was, as we have said, to wait forty days at Martinique, to give Ganteaume time to get out of Brest and join him there. After Villeneuve's departure, Napoleon wrote every day to Ganteaume: 'Start . . . start, you hold the destinies of the world in your hands!'[1] But the weather, which was not in the secret, was distressingly fine that year, and Lord Cornwallis blockaded Brest with an assiduity and vigilance that nothing could discourage. The whole of the month of April was passed in fruitless expectation of a favourable wind, and it was once more necessary to modify this grand plan. Fresh instructions were successively carried to Villeneuve by Admiral Magon and the frigate *La Topaze*, ordering him not to wait for Ganteaume after the 21st of June; for if, as was becoming probable, this admiral found no opportunity of getting out of Brest before May 20th, he would receive orders not to start.

[1] Napoleon to Ganteaume, April 11, 1805.

Villeneuve was then to return to Europe, passing by Ferrol, where he would find a squadron of fifteen Franco-Spanish vessels. At the head of all these united forces, which would raise his fleet to at least thirty-five vessels, he was to present himself before Brest, force the blockade of Cornwallis, and, after having effected his junction with Ganteaume he would be able to appear before Boulogne, having under his command an immense naval force amounting to fifty-five sail. He had, however, the choice of several other combinations less complicated, such as to steer straight for Boulogne without going to Brest; and it was added, that if, for any reason whatever, it was impossible for him to carry out these instructions, he would be able to fall back upon Cadiz.[1]

The news of Nelson's arrival at Barbados, after a voyage twice as rapid as our own, forced Villeneuve to shorten a delay that, after all, would have been useless, since Ganteaume was detained to the last by the calm. While his hot adversary, led astray by false intelligence, had gone to seek him first at Trinity, then at Antigua, Villeneuve, satisfied by the capture of Fort Diamond and some damage done to English commerce, very desirous, too, of avoiding an encounter with an enemy whose strength he exaggerated, and subordinating everything to the necessity of fulfilling his mission, quitted the West Indies to return to Europe.

On the 13th of June Nelson had again set out in his pursuit. If he had known that Villeneuve's destination was Ferrol, it is probable that he would have overtaken him and beaten him by the way; but not yet suspecting Napoleon's plan, he had steered with all haste for Cadiz and Gibraltar, supposing that Villeneuve would endeavour to gain the Mediterranean. He however took the prudent precaution of giving the English Admiralty intelligence of this double return. The brig *The Curious* which he despatched with this mission met with the French fleet on the way, recognised the direction it was taking, and, while it was detained by contrary winds, sailed for Plymouth.

[1] Napoleon to Decrès, March 8, 1805.—To Villeneuve the same day, first and second instructions.

On the 9th of July the English Admiralty received this valuable information, and a few days later, the 15th of July, a squadron of fifteen vessels, under the orders of Admiral Calder, was despatched to wait for Villeneuve off Cape Finisterre.

While the project was being complicated by these unforeseen incidents, Napoleon was indulging in a thousand conjectures on the probable movements of the English navy. He took a special delight in attributing to it the falsest manœuvres, such as the expedition of a fleet to India, or orders to raise the blockade of Brest. He blamed the incredulity of Decrès, whose cool and sensible mind refused to share his illusions. 'Your fault,' he would say to him, 'is to *calculate as if the English were in the secret.*'[1] As for himself, he calculated as if the English had no other aim than to second his undertaking, and as if he had made a pact with the elements. He already saw himself master of England. 'I do not know in truth,' he wrote, in the same letter, 'what kind of precaution she can take to guarantee herself against the terrible risk she runs! It is very foolish of a nation without either fortifications or land armies to expose themselves to the liability of seeing an army of a hundred thousand warriors among them!' His mind was engrossed in Nelson's campaign; but, instead of fearing the terrible rapidity of a man who possessed in almost the same degree as himself the genius of war, he only ascribed to him hesitations, mistakes, and loss of time. 'Nelson will *lose* two days at Cape Verd; he *will lose* a great many days more in picking up vessels and frigates by the way. When he learns that Villeneuve is not off the Windward Islands, he will go to Jamaica, and during the time that he will lose in revictualling and waiting for him there, the great blows will be struck; *this is my calculation.*'[2]

In this calculation he was to be mistaken, because, instead of putting things at the worst, as the deplorable state of our navy and the difficulty of the undertaking required, he put them at the best, like a spoilt child of

[1] Napoleon to Decrès, June 9.
[2] Napoleon to Decrès, June 28.

fortune. The good luck that had attended the junction of the Batavian flotilla, under the orders of Admiral Verhuell, after an insignificant combat at Cape Grinez, had raised his hopes to an extraordinary pitch. As the decisive moment approached he lost his coolness, modified his plans, and compromised the results already obtained, by the insurmountable fickleness of his opinions. It was in one of these moods that he had returned to the plan of confiding to Ganteaume alone the task that he had given to Villeneuve. According to this fresh scheme, Ganteaume was to deceive Cornwallis, or force his line of blockade, take reinforcements at Ferrol and Rochefort, and then return straight to Boulogne.[1] The only thing wanting for carrying it out was the power of getting out of Brest. It is, moreover, worthy of remark, that in the working of his naval campaign Napoleon showed himself in everything the opposite of what he was in land warfare; he did not display in it any one of the qualities that made his marvellous fortune. Instead of trying to see events as they were, he saw them as he wished them to be; instead of adopting a fixed plan and keeping to it, he incessantly changed it. He blamed men for the defect of things, was irritated by objections instead of soliciting them, denied difficulties instead of endeavouring to solve them, and overwhelmed with reproaches and accusations naval men, who were unanimous against his project, instead of enlightening himself by their knowledge and experience.

While Napoleon was making this useless appeal to Ganteaume, Villeneuve met, on the 22d of July, about fifty leagues off Cape Finisterre, with Calder's fleet, which the English Admiralty had sent to encounter him. Although he had under his orders twenty vessels and seven frigates, while Calder had only fifteen vessels, Villeneuve had not a very great advantage over him, on account of the immense inferiority of our navy; but he was protected by the indecision of his adversary. The battle, obscured by a thick fog which prevented any general manœuvre, was not in our favour, but it was of slight importance. The English fleet

[1] Napoleon to Ganteaume, July 20.

retreated, carrying off two Spanish vessels. They did not, however, return to renew the engagement, nor to oppose Villeneuve's movements, who was able to enter first Vigo, then Ferrol and Corunna, where the Franco-Spanish squadron was assembled to the number of twenty-nine vessels (August 2).[1]

Thus far Villeneuve had carried out his instructions. But the perplexities, which from the opening of the campaign had not ceased to beset his mind on account of the immense responsibility which weighed upon him and the perfect knowledge that he had of our maritime inferiority, had become greater than ever since his return to Europe. The battle of Cape Finisterre, in spite of the individual courage which our sailors had displayed, had fully confirmed him in his former opinion, which he thus expressed in a letter to Decrès: 'We have bad masts, bad sails, bad rigging, bad officers, and bad sailors.' But there was more than this: he knew now for a certainty that England had received intelligence, and that all the fruit of this long campaign in the West Indies, undertaken to draw away the British forces and to concentrate our own, had been lost. Our concentration was in reality scarcely more advanced than at the time when he had quitted Toulon, for he had not been able to join either Missiessy or Ganteaume, and the squadrons that he had wanted to draw in his pursuit had either never left Europe or had returned at the same time as himself. He was therefore sure of meeting them on his way, either in leaving Ferrol or before Brest. In this case he regarded the battle as lost; but whatever would be the issue, by the sole fact that the alarm was given, the plan was compromised. His colleague Gravina thought exactly the same; and events proved that they were right. Nelson had returned to Gibraltar by the 18th of July; as soon as he knew the direction taken by Villeneuve, he had prepared to rejoin Cornwallis before Brest, in spite of contrary winds. He effected his junction on the 15th of August, left him eight vessels, and with the two others proceeded to Portsmouth.

[1] *Rapport et Journal du Vice-Amiral Villeneuve;* Report of Calder to Admiral Cornwallis, July 23. *Annual Register* for the year 1805.

The day before, August 14th, Calder had taken nine of his own squadron to Cornwallis, who thus found himself at the head of a fleet of thirty-five vessels. He made two equal divisions of it: on the 17th of August he sent one, composed of eighteen vessels, to go and again blockade Ferrol, and he kept the others to watch Ganteaume. Besides these two squadrons, the English had from Brest to Ferrol a detachment of five vessels, under the orders of Admiral Stirling, and a number of advice boats and vessels of all sizes which espied all our movements.[1]

Villeneuve was forced to remain at Ferrol and Corunna till the 11th of August, to repair his damaged ships. He could not set sail with all his fleet till the 13th. If he had proceeded to Brest before this date, as Napoleon in his impatience had prescribed to him, his twenty-nine vessels would have come in contact with the thirty-five ships of Cornwallis, and he would have been crushed before Ganteaume had been able to make a movement. By starting later, he had a slight chance of crossing the fleet that Cornwallis was sending to blockade him at Ferrol under the orders of Calder, but what probability was there of his escaping a squadron following exactly the same line as himself, upon a sea covered on all sides with the enemies' cruisers, which followed him step by step?[2] Even if he had accomplished this miracle, he might have been able to outstrip Calder before Brest, but not in the Channel, where this Admiral had gone with all speed. Moreover, he did not know of his departure from Brest, for Calder only left

[1] M. Thiers says, speaking of this junction (vol. vi. p. 130): 'The news of the junction of Nelson with Admirals Calder and Cornwallis was *true in some respects*, for Nelson had *visited* Cornwallis off Brest; but it was false in the most important point, since Nelson *had not stopped* off Brest, but had sailed for Portsmouth.' He had not, it is true, stopped there, but he had left his fleet except two vessels. Was not that the important point?

[2] M. Thiers does not hesitate to say 'that he would have crossed without meeting with Calder, who would have gone to blockade Ferrol empty; that he would have surprised Cornwallis,' etc. M. l'Amiral Jurien de la Gravière, who is severe for Villeneuve, however, says: 'It is more probable that Calder would have been informed of Villeneuve's movements.'—*Guerres Maritimes.*

Cornwallis on the 17th of August, and Villeneuve had to reason on the hypothesis of a triple junction between Nelson, Calder, and Cornwallis. He therefore left Ferrol, a prey to irresolution and discouragement, weighed down under the burden of his responsibility, his heart filled with anguish; but it was patriotic anguish, for if he trembled, it was not for himself,—he gave sufficient proof of this at Trafalgar. Gravina, who has often been contrasted with him, followed, overwhelmed by the orders which he was required to obey, and, according to an expression of Villeneuve, 'with the devotion of despair.' Such dispositions could only lead to a disaster. As a climax to misfortune, the wind had become contrary, our ships worked so badly that several ran foul of each other in getting out of port; finally, we were followed by two British ships of the line and several frigates, which did not lose one of our movements.[1] In this situation, a merchant vessel having given intelligence, afterwards recognised as false, of the approach of an English fleet of twenty-five vessels, Villeneuve no longer hesitated,—he veered round to the south, set sail for Cadiz, turning his back upon Brest.

While the unfortunate Villeneuve, yielding to inspirations which, though not very heroic, were wise and sensible, delayed the hour of destruction of our navy, with the certainty of receiving for reward the reproaches of the most exacting of masters, Napoleon, watching on the coast of Boulogne, his eyes fixed on the horizon where he expected every moment to see his victorious fleet appear, experienced all the agitations of hope and fear, and endured with a heart full with anger the torment he was least capable of bearing —that of uncertainty. Everything had long since been ready at Boulogne and in the surrounding ports. The troops went daily through their manœuvres of disembarking, and the immense flotilla was only waiting for a signal. Ganteaume had received orders to anchor in the roadstead of Bertheaume, that he might get away more easily. Napoleon had not heard of the battle of Cape Finisterre till the 7th of August; though very discontented with

[1] Villeneuve to Decrès, August 22.

Villeneuve, he had written to encourage him: 'Appear here for twenty-four hours, and you will have fulfilled your mission.'[1] A few days later he had read a letter in which Villeneuve expressed to Decrès his perplexities on leaving Ferrol, and this letter had exasperated him. 'I consider,' he wrote to the minister of marine, 'that Villeneuve is not fit to command a frigate!' He consequently wanted to withdraw his command, and again give it to Ganteaume. He had not, however, a very clear idea of the real state of affairs; he denied, without any grounds, the junction of Nelson with Calder and Cornwallis, and affirmed that even according to the English papers Nelson had been obliged to start for the Canary Islands.[2] However, he still believed that Villeneuve was on his way to Brest, and wrote to him in that town: 'Vice-admiral, I hope that you have arrived at Brest. Set out, lose not a moment, bring our united squadrons into the Channel, and *England is ours!*' (August 22d).

This illusion was quickly dispelled, and Decrès, who took the same view as Villeneuve about the inevitable issue of an attempt in the Channel, but who had never ventured to give Napoleon his entire opinion, at last decided to tell him the truth, as gently as possible, but with perfect sincerity. This undertaking could only, he believed, lead to great catastrophes; and if the fleet had started for Cadiz, he ought to consider that as a decree of Providence; they ought to return to the principles of a naval war proportioned to our mediocre resources, that is to say, give up these gigantic operations, which were almost impossible of execution even with skilled seamen, and make war upon England in an ordinary way. Thus all the eminent men who had been Napoleon's chief co-operators in this colossal enterprise were of the same opinion as to its probable results; for Ganteaume thought like Decrès, and Gravina—he whom Napoleon styled 'that stupid Gravina, who was all genius and all fire in battle,'—thought like Villeneuve; Napoleon

[1] Napoleon to Villeneuve, August 13.

[2] This letter, which is of the greatest importance for the justification of Villeneuve, is dated August 22, 1805.

was accordingly obliged to resign himself to this miserable failure of so many pompously announced projects. Never did more threatening preparations and more haughty demonstrations come to a more pitiable issue. A great disaster like that of La Hogue would at least have given him an excuse, and at all events have saved him from ridicule. When Napoleon pressed Villeneuve *to sacrifice himself* for Ganteaume to get out of Brest, it was probably with some idea of escaping from his own false position, even at the price of a lost battle, of which the responsibility would after all fall upon another.

All his calculations fell to the ground at once, and his anger was proportionate to his disappointment. He poured out bitter complaints on the incapacity of his seamen, on the conduct of Decrès, on the disgraceful weakness of Villeneuve, who was both a coward and a traitor; in short, he accused every one except himself, the sole author of the evil by his infatuation and blind obstinacy. If things had followed their natural course, there would not have been sufficient hisses in Europe to celebrate this immense *fiasco*, but Napoleon had already taken precautions to turn the attention of the nations in another direction.

What in reality appears still more incredible than the peripetias which we have just explained is, that during the whole of this time, and even on the eve of executing this hazardous descent upon England, instead of seeking to conciliate his enemies on the Continent, Napoleon had never ceased to provoke them and drive them into war. His relations — already far from cordial — with Austria had been made worse and worse. On the 31st of July he wrote to Talleyrand: 'The news from Italy is all of war.' That this power was arming he knew, and he had several times given her notice to leave off arming. He caused the most threatening articles to be inserted in the *Moniteur*, and on the 12th of August he sent a fresh summons to her, announcing 'that he was going to break up his camps by the Ocean, and send his troops into Switzerland.' He knew also, for a certainty, that behind her there were Russia, Sweden, and Naples; that Prussia was hesitating, that none

of our allies were sure; and yet, in such a situation, he still persisted in trying to throw upon England the only army that could cover France. What did this deluded genius want? What did he hope to do? To fall upon London like a thunderbolt, and retire before the army of the coalition had been able to set a foot on our territory? This was the most venturesome and mad idea! Who, without egregious puerility, could have believed that so high-minded and energetic a nation would not have offered him the same resistance as the negroes of St. Domingo had done?

French historians have ridiculously underrated the military forces which England could then oppose to us. All the official documents on the state of the British forces, published at that time, show that the volunteers alone amounted to *four hundred thousand men.* Supposing Napoleon to have succeeded in the perilous operation of disembarkment, in spite of Nelson, in spite of the combined fleets of Cornwallis and Calder, in spite of the innumerable multitude of vessels of every size that were ready to dispute our passage,—supposing that he had landed on the same point of the British shore the whole of his hundred and fifty thousand men, is it likely that these four hundred thousand volunteers, sustained by a regular army of great strength, would not have detained him long enough to allow the coalition to invade France, which was not defended? this is such a chimerical romance that it resembles the visions of a diseased brain, and we should be inclined to regard the whole affair as a lie and a comedy, if it were not for the thousands of proofs that Napoleon thought seriously of his project. To all those which I have already mentioned I shall add a last, which is not the least curious. It is a medal with the head of the Emperor crowned with laurels, on one side, and on the other, the image of Hercules stifling the giant Antæus in his arms. It bears the motto, '*Descente en Angleterre*,' and underneath in small letters, '*frappée à Londres en* 1804.'[1] This lying legend—

[1] One of these medals is in England, and Lord Stanhope, who is my authority for this curious fact, possesses a copy of it.

eternal monument of the presumption of him who coined it—was all that remained of the great expedition.

The confusion which was inseparable from such a failure, the state of open hostility to which he had driven his enemies, obliged Napoleon promptly to resolve upon some bold step, if he wished to avoid ridicule and profit by his advantages. He had in reality very considerable ones. He possessed, as he said, the finest army in Europe, the whole of which was available, while the troops of the coalition, dispersed over an immense space, were only half-organised, and were not at all inured to the hardships of war; he knew the views of the allies, who understood nothing of his plans; by acting with his accustomed rapidity he could be at Vienna before the Russians were in Moravia. He was aware of all these circumstances, he had many times pondered over the possibility of turning his army of the Ocean upon Germany; his letters to Talleyrand and Cambacérès contain the clearest evidence of this. He had, moreover, long been accustomed always to make 'his plans,' as he said, 'in two ways,' so as never to be taken unawares. There is, therefore, more fiction than truth in the story of his suddenly transforming schemes that had been disconcerted by the defection of Villeneuve, and by a sublime effort improvising and dictating to Daru the plan of his magnificent campaign in Germany. He had thought of it for several months, reserving to himself, it is true, the choice of the moment, and he had already taken a great many preliminary precautions, which, however, in no way diminishes the merit of the conception. If, as some would give us to understand, Napoleon had only thought at the last moment of this change, we must deny him all foresight, and refuse to his political intelligence much more than is accorded to his military genius.

He immediately then resolved to extricate himself from the embarrassment of his false and intolerable position by throwing himself upon Germany with his whole army, which two years of constant exercise had brought to an incomparable degree of strength. His principal corps immediately began to be put in motion. His lieutenants received on all points instructions relative to their first dispositions.

Bernadotte, who commanded the army of Hanover, had orders to mass his troops towards Göttingen; Eugène, to bring his upon the Adige; Saint-Cyr, to be ready to throw himself upon Naples; Marmont, to prepare to march from the Texel upon Mayence, everything to be done with the greatest secrecy, in order to leave his enemies in all security. At the same time Duroc was despatched to Berlin with a mission to offer Hanover to Prussia, as the price of a demonstration against Austria; but he was not to allow the independence of Switzerland, of Holland, or of Naples to be called into question. If this offer had been made a few months earlier, it might have gained us the alliance of Prussia; it was too late now to induce a power that had become mistrustful, and that was bound by other engagements, to accept such a proposal.

CHAPTER II

CAPITULATION OF ULM—NAPOLEON AT VIENNA

This sudden change of plans gave Napoleon an immense advantage over the coalition: he knew their projects, they as yet knew nothing of his; he had the finest, the best exercised, and the most compact army that France had ever possessed; their troops were of unequal strength and were scattered all over Europe, while Austria, who was to furnish the advance-guard, was only ready in Italy, where the Archduke Charles was going to have under his orders about a hundred thousand men. On the Bavarian frontier she had only an army of from seventy to eighty thousand men,[1] commanded by Mack, a general already celebrated by his ill-luck, the former adversary of Championnet in the kingdom of Naples. Of the two Russian corps which were to support this army, the nearest had not yet arrived on the frontier of Galicia, the other was concentrated in the neighbourhood of Warsaw; they required more than a month to join Mack, supposing that they did not lose an instant, while Napoleon could reach him in twenty or twenty-five days. But the allies felt so much the more secure because, in spite of the increasing coolness of the diplomatic relations between France and Austria, war was not declared, and they thought that they had all the time necessary to collect their forces. They accordingly medi-

[1] The Austrian official accounts, quoted by General Danilewski (*Rélation de la Campagne de* 1805), estimate Mack's army at 80,000 men. Murat, however, who was on the spot, only reckoned it at 72,000 men (letter of September 10 to Napoleon. *Mémorial du dépôt de la guerre*). And this is also the number given by the Archduke Ferdinand, in a letter to Kutuzoff, dated October 8.

tated two principal attacks: one in Italy upon the Adige, where Masséna had scarcely more than fifty thousand men to oppose to the army of the Archduke Charles; the other by the valley of the Danube and Suabia, with the combined forces of Russia and Austria, and, if possible, of Bavaria. This state had become hostile to Austria since the division of the Germanic indemnities, but they hoped to draw her along willingly or by force at the last moment. Two other secondary attacks were to be directed, one against our army of Hanover, by the landing of English, Russian, and Swedish troops, the other against our corps of occupation in the Gulf of Tarento by an Anglo-Russian corps, which would release the kingdom of Naples, draw it into the coalition, and thus threaten Masséna's rear.

Such was the military situation upon which Napoleon had to make his calculations, when, at the end of August 1805, he saw himself obliged to give up his projects against England. He immediately threw his troops by forced marches upon the Rhine, carefully calculating their movements. His general plan, so often commented upon since, may be thus summed up: to disregard the secondary attacks, to confine himself in Italy to the defensive till our victories in Germany had forced the archduke to retreat, to concentrate all his forces upon the Danube, to outstrip the Russians there, in order to crush, before their junction with Mack, the weak army which was the sole bulwark of the Austrian monarchy. It is a fiction of which his military glory has no need, to attribute to him, as early as the month of August, in Boulogne, the grand idea 'of surrounding the Austrians in Ulm, and taking them prisoners there,'[1] seeing that Mack had not yet crossed the Inn, and did not occupy this place till much later—the 18th of September.[2]

Napoleon thought so little of it at that time that his chief fear was lest the Austrians should penetrate into Bavaria. 'What I want,' he wrote to Talleyrand, August

[1] Thiers: *History of the Consulate and the Empire.*

[2] The date is fixed by a letter of Murat's, who was then in Bavaria in disguise.

25, 'is to gain twenty days, and *to prevent the Austrians from crossing the Inn* while I am marching upon the Rhine.' If his object had been, as early as that, to cut them off from the basis of their operations, his interest was to let them not only cross the Inn, but advance into Suabia; but, far from supposing that they intended to occupy Ulm, he wrote the same day to the Elector of Bavaria 'to have prepared for him at this place five hundred thousand rations of biscuits.' He was as yet only thinking of taking the most direct and the easiest route to penetrate into the heart of the Austrian monarchy, to attack it with an army so superior in number and quality to Mack's troops that his very appearance would annihilate it. The extent of our conquests gave him invaluable facilities for attaining this end. With all the passages of the Rhine in his possession, he had no anxiety about a barrier formerly so difficult to cross; he had for allies, either secret or open, all those states whose neutrality we had hitherto had to conciliate or else to fight them, the electorates of Hesse-Darmstadt, of Baden, of Wurtemberg, and Bavaria; and he had in Hanover and Holland two considerable *corps d'armée*, which could reach the Danube in fifteen or twenty marches, by turning the Rhine and all those passes of the Black Forest whose occupation had formerly cost us so much blood.

When Napoleon turned upon Austria with an army of nearly 200,000 men,[1] at a time when she had scarcely

[1] Napoleon's army amounted to nearly this number, without counting the Bavarian contingent and those of the other small German States. The correspondence of Napoleon, of Berthier, of Marmont, and of the other generals, all proves that out of the seven corps which formed the grand army, three were composed of 30,000 men (Soult, Ney, Lannes), and three others of 25,000 (Marmont, Davoust, Bernadotte). Augereau had only 12,000. But to this total we must add the guard and cavalry of Murat, which contained together about 20,000 men. With the German contingents, the grand army rose to at least *two hundred and twenty-five thousand men*, a number that has always been underrated. The statements, published by the *Mémorial du dépôt de la guerre* (vol. viii.), on this point are perfectly incorrect. They were prepared by Napoleon himself, as well as the *Rélations* which are added to them, with his customary veracity, and with a view to *throwing light upon history*.

80,000 to oppose to him in Germany, his first anxiety would naturally be to reach the Danube by the shortest road, and destroy Mack before the arrival of the Russians. This road was easy to trace, it was through Hesse, the north of Baden, and Wurtemberg. The necessity of joining, in Franconia, the corps that Bernadotte was bringing him from Hanover by Göttingen, and Marmont from Holland, by Mayence, left him no choice with regard to this route. It is therefore quite childish to praise him for not having thought of operating by Switzerland and the Lake of Constance, and recommending Moreau's campaign of 1800, that is to say, for not having gone 150 leagues out of his way through an impracticable country, in order to surround an enemy in Suabia who was not there! Everything was changed since then, both in the positions and the size of the armies. Instead of Kray upon the Rhine, we had to fight Mack on the Inn, nearly a hundred leagues farther off; instead of commanding an army scarcely equal to the Austrian troops, obliged to make a detachment of a quarter of its effective force, and subordinate to the movements of that of Italy, Napoleon had an army more than double the size of that of his adversary; his movements were free, he was master of all the resources of a vast empire. Nothing, in short, had remained in the same state, not even that famous position of Ulm but lately the key of the Danube, and in which Kray had been able to sustain so long a siege, thanks to the instructions which paralysed Moreau. The place had still fortifications, but those of the intrenched camp had been demolished, and could no longer offer any protection to the Austrian army, if Mack were to take up his position there.

While his soldiers were executing this bold march, Napoleon multiplied his stratagems and pacific demonstrations in order to prolong the error of the allies. He continued to reside at Boulogne, so as to induce a belief that his determination was not changed. His diplomacy, hitherto so haughty, had assumed the most gentle and conciliatory tone. 'It is no longer daring that is needed,' he wrote to Talleyrand, 'but *pusillanimity*, that I may have time to

prepare.'[1] Eugène, the Viceroy of Italy, received on his side instructions 'to talk of peace, but to work for war.' In his march from Hanover to the Danube, Bernadotte had orders to tell every one that he was merely taking this route to bring his corps back into France.[2] The *Moniteur*, generally so provocative, suddenly changed its tone. It no longer contained a word of politics; it spoke of recent publications, of the eruption of Vesuvius, of the rain and fine weather. It gravely announced '*that the Russians continued to make preparations against the Persians*,' but of those that were everywhere being made against France it did not say a word. Judging from it, Europe had never been more tranquil; and it did not inform the public till the 22d of September that the Austrians had crossed the Inn on the 7th of the same month. As it was impossible, however, completely to conceal this immense movement of troops, Napoleon authorised his ministers to acknowledge that, as a precautionary measure, he was concentrating about thirty thousand men upon his eastern frontier. The principal commanders alone were told his real projects. At the same time that he concealed them with so much skill, he took measures, both abroad and at home, with admirable decision. Three of his best officers—Murat, Bertrand, and Savary—were sent in disguise into Germany, to examine all the localities through which our army would pass, to obtain all possible information about the state of places, routes, rivers, the positions occupied by the enemy, their plans real or supposed, and the forces of which they could dispose. He wanted to have, and in reality he had, by his numerous agents in Germany, a correct statement of the movements of the Austrian troops, *day by day, and regiment by regiment*.[3] Murat had besides orders to see the Elector of Bavaria, who was for us, but who, till our arrival, saw himself with terror at the mercy of the Austrian troops; he was to reassure him, and to announce to him that we were coming to his assistance. He took him a letter from

[1] Napoleon to Talleyrand, August 25.
[2] Napoleon to Bernadotte, September 6, 1805.
[3] Napoleon to Berthier, August 28.

Napoleon, full of protestations and promises. The Emperor opened his mind to him, confided to his honour the secret of his operations, told him 'of the aggrandisement and splendour' that would be the price of his fidelity; he lamented that he was driven to the extremity of war: 'my heart bleeds,' he said, 'when I think of all the evils that will result from it, but God knows that I am innocent!' Duroc was still at Berlin, where he was endeavouring to gain Prussia by the offer of Hanover. But this power, who would have accepted it without hesitation a few months before, for she was no longer asked for anything beyond a mere demonstration, was now too deeply engaged with Russia, and had raised too many complaints against the ambition of France, to receive such a present without stipulating something for European interests. She willingly consented to all that had been done in Italy, but she required that the independence of Holland and Switzerland should be expressly guaranteed; and as Napoleon would not listen to such a condition, Prussia returned to her old system of neutrality, but with a secret irritation against us, and with a decided leaning towards our adversaries.

A treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, was concluded with Baden and Hesse-Darmstadt. Nothing was yet signed with Wurtemberg, but everything announced on the part of this power an adhesion that she was not in a state to refuse. In order to put an end to the hesitation of the Elector, Napoleon had already proposed to the hereditary Prince of Wurtemberg to put him in his father's place;[1] but this project was not carried out. These small states furnished him a contingent of about twelve thousand men who did not enter the lines, but who were not the less useful in protecting his communications. The Bavarian army, which reckoned 25,000 men, was to fight by the side of our soldiers. Of all the states whose weakness placed them at our discretion, the kingdom of Naples was alone excluded from these treaties of alliance, which could, moreover, have no other effect than that of perpetuating their subjection, by disguising it under benefits that were more

[1] Napoleon to Talleyrand, August 25.

burdensome than the evils of war. Saint-Cyr received formal orders to seize Naples and drive out the court, the moment our armies should cross the Rhine; till then he was *closely to conceal his projects*.[1] But a short time after Napoleon found it more advantageous to conclude a treaty of neutrality with the Court of Naples, which would enable him to throw the corps of Saint-Cyr upon the Po, to serve as a rear-guard and reserve to Masséna. When the *Moniteur* publised this treaty, it prefaced it with the following reflections: 'The interest of France no doubt suggested the desirability of assuring, by *an easy and useful conquest*, a kingdom that touches upon his Majesty's States in Italy. But he would not have it said that he had put an obstacle to the general peace; he has followed those principles of generous and moderate policy which regulate all his determinations.' That was singular moderation, which was displayed in such contempt for a foreign sovereign! All these fine phrases meant that, at this critical moment, it had been thought better to postpone the downfall of the Bourbons in Naples, but they were warned that the step was only deferred. This incidental explanation suffices to reduce to their true worth all the declamations of Napoleon with regard to the intrigues and perfidy of the Court of Naples.

In spite of the very softened tone of his notes to M. de Cobentzel, Talleyrand did not succeed in gaining with Austria all the time that Napoleon had demanded; but this power was still completely deceived, with regard both to the nature and extent of our military movements. She hurried on the opening of the campaign, in the hope of dragging in the Elector of Bavaria. After having solemnly promised to join his troops to those of the Emperor of Austria, this prince pertinaciously postponed the signing of the treaty of alliance. Austria, for the sake of gaining 25,000 men, exposed her own army and the Empire itself to an imminent danger, which she did yet suspect. The last note that she had exchanged with the French Government, at the moment of the opening of hostilities, had not been

[1] Napoleon to Saint-Cyr, September 2.

wanting in either strength or dignity, although some of the grievances contained in it were mere pretexts. When called upon to give some explanation of her armaments, she grounded them upon the necessity of reminding France of the respect for treaties which she had herself imposed upon Europe. In this Austria no doubt affected a zeal that she did not in reality feel for transactions which had been the work of our victories; but still, since some legal ground had to be found, she could not be refused the right of appealing to treaties made against her. 'The peace between France and Austria,' said this manifesto, 'rests upon the treaty of Lunéville, of which one of the conditions stipulates and guarantees the independence of the republics of Italy, as well as of the Helvetic and Batavian republics, and assures them the liberty of choosing a government. Every endeavour to oblige them to adopt a government, a constitution, a master, otherwise than of their free choice, otherwise than by preserving a real political independence, is an infringement of the peace of Lunéville, and Austria has a right to protest against it, and to seek to redress the wrong!'

Strange and memorable spectacle—Austria protesting against us, and demanding with truth and justice the independence of those republics that we had founded, and that she had so long opposed—what was better calculated to characterise our policy? The manifesto then set forth all the forbearance that she had shown towards us; if she had hitherto consented to be silent, it was through a spirit of conciliation; but she had not renounced either her rights or the maintenance of the tranquillity of Europe. 'This tranquillity is disturbed,' added the manifesto, 'when a power claims the rights of occupation, of protection, of influence, which are neither acknowledged by the law of nations nor by treaties; when she talks of rights of victory, which have become extinct by peace; when she employs violence and fear to dictate laws to her neighbours, in order to oblige them to assimilate their constitutions to her own, or to wrest from them alliances, concessions, acts of submission or incorporation; when she pretends that her dignity is offended by well-founded remonstrances, while her own

papers are attacking every monarch in succession; lastly, when she sets herself up as sole arbiter of the fate and common interest of nations, and excludes the other Powers from all participation in the maintenance of the general equilibrium, some because they are too far distant, others because an arm of the sea separates them from the Continent, answering the complaints of the nearest Powers about the danger by evasive replies, by assemblages of troops upon their frontiers, and by menaces of rupture if they prepare for defence.'[1]

To this terribly true and striking picture there was nothing to reply but cannon shot; and such was in reality the answer that Napoleon was preparing to make to Austria. His soldiers had not yet terminated their evolution on the Rhine, when the whole of France was already transformed into one vast camp, and so organised as to suffice for itself during his absence. He had left at Boulogne, for the protection of the flotilla and the defence of the coasts, a *corps d'armée* of 25,000 men, commanded by Marshal Brune, formed with the depots of a part of his regiments, and with the 10,000 sailors of the English expedition organised in battalions. He decreed the reorganisation of the national guards throughout the whole country, but he reserved for himself the nomination of the officers; he mobilised into select companies, destined specially for the defence of fortresses, the youngest and most warlike portion of this corps. He completed these measures by calling to arms, not only the levy of the current year and the remaining part of the contingent of the preceding years, but an anticipatory levy, comprising the men who would attain the required age in the first three months of the following year. These levies gave him a reserve of nearly 150,000 men, who were sent upon the Rhine to exercise under the command of Marshals Kellermann and Lefebvre. This decree gave rise to a difficulty that would have embarrassed any one but Napoleon. The constitution had ordained that the voting of levies of men, like that of imposts, belonged to the Legislative Body. But how could this assembly be called together at such a

[1] Note of Count Louis de Cobentzel, September 12, 1805.

time? The public were anxious and dissatisfied; a grave financial crisis, caused by our immense war expenses, was beginning to manifest itself; Paris murmured aloud, and denounced the folly of an ambition that had again armed Europe against us. He would therefore have to enter into explanations, to listen to advice, perhaps even criticisms! In fact he would have to acknowledge the existence of that coalition, so many times denied by the impudent lies of the *Moniteur!* He would have to admit either that he had been blind or that he had knowingly deceived France! Napoleon took care not to make such an alternative necessary; he knew the French people well enough to be sure that so long as he was absolved by victory he had no need of any other justification, and this victory he was now certain of gaining, owing to the success of his feints, the headlong haste of his enemies, and the overwhelming superiority of his forces. He did not hesitate therefore to violate once more a constitution which had never been more than a letter, and the Senate eagerly legalised this violation, certain of alleging it against him as a crime in the day of his reverses.

As soon as these measures, which he always considered as the most important, were taken, he distributed the offices to the men to whom he intended to entrust the government during his absence. The presidency of the Senate and the honours of power were allotted to Joseph, the grand elector; but Cambacérès had all the real power, at least so much of it as Napoleon could consent to relinquish. He was charged to preside over the Council of State, and to assemble the ministers at least once a week, but they were all to correspond with Napoleon on the affairs of their departments. The minister of police received special orders to write *every day.*[1] This minister was in reality the mainspring of the Government. Napoleon then bade adieu to the Senate. He was leaving, he said, to go and succour his allies; till within *the last few days* he had hoped that peace would not be disturbed, but his hopes had vanished. 'It is now,'

[1] Order of Service during the Emperor's absence, September 23, 1805.

he added, 'that the wickedness of the enemies of the Continent is displayed! They dreaded the manifestation of *my great love for peace;* they dreaded lest Austria, seeing the abyss that they had dug beneath her feet, should embrace views of justice and moderation; they have driven her into war. *I deplore the blood that it will cost Europe,* but it will add new lustre to the French name.'

While he deplored this cruel extremity, his *corps d'armée,* pursuing their secret march, were crossing the Rhine at Mayence, at Spires, and at Mannheim, and were advancing into the heart of Germany. There they were about to join hands with Bernadotte, who had already arrived at Würzburg, where the Elector of Bavaria, threatened by Austria, had taken refuge with his twenty-five thousand men. Driven to extremities by the tergiversations of this prince, the Austrians had passed the Inn on the 17th of September; on the 18th they occupied Ulm. It was then only that Napoleon, on the receipt of a letter from Murat, conceived the idea of shutting them up in Suabia, by cutting off their communications with Austria, making use of a manœuvre similar to that which he had employed at Marengo, but with much more certainty, on account of his immense superiority over the army of Mack.[1] He immediately settled the positions to be occupied upon the Danube by the different corps that were still upon the Rhine. By throwing them upon Donauwörth, Ingolstadt, and Ratisbon, he made himself master of the river, and he only needed a few marches to seize all Mack's communications with Vienna, and completely to invest him before the arrival of the Russian army, which had scarcely begun to move. He trembled lest Mack should discover in time the secret of this manœuvre, at once so simple and so decisive, but in this respect he was marvellously protected by the dispersion of our corps, by the mystery which enveloped their marches, and by the foolish confidence of his adversary. He skilfully confirmed the mistake of the Austrian staff, by making Murat and his cavalry appear at the entrance of the principal defiles of the Black Forest, as if he had resolved to plunge into it,

[1] Note on the movement of the grand army, September 22.

according to the routine of our first wars in Germany. He himself remained at Strasburg till the last moment, as though he intended to attack his enemy in front instead of in the rear. It was from there that he addressed to the soldiers the proclamation which was to open this glorious campaign. He abstained this time from the bombastic declarations which often spoiled his military harangues, and confined himself to explaining in a few energetic phrases the aim of their efforts. 'We will not stop till we have insured the independence of the Germanic body, succoured our allies, and confounded the pride of unjust aggressors. We will not again make peace without a guarantee. Our generosity will no longer blind us in our policy. Soldiers! your Emperor is in the midst of you. You are but the vanguard of a great people!'

For France Napoleon had become a dreaded despot, a majesty, a kind of sovereign of the ancient *régime;* for her soldiers he had remained the Bonaparte of the army of Italy. They recognised with joy the well-known manner and language of their old general. They were soldiers, but they were soldiers who remembered that they had been citizens, they were the tools of his despotism, but they had been formed by liberty, they were in spite of everything sons of the Revolution. Napoleon was less their master than their favourite. He was their work. He was not in their eyes a sovereign, but a sort of military tribune. He treated them as equals, communicated to them his thoughts; sometimes even, as at Austerlitz, he explained to them beforehand his plan of battle, as he would have done before a council of war. He shared his power with them. The chiefs of the army showed themselves humble and submissive; the soldiers were still his companions rather than his servants; hence their enthusiasm for him, and their incalculable superiority over the living machines disciplined under the Austrian stick. But if they had become incomparable instruments for conquest, how much had they not lost of the generous and disinterested spirit of our old republican armies! Such as it then was, thanks to the sentiments that Bonaparte had endeavoured

to develop in it, the grand army may be said to be incompatible with the maintenance of a legal and pacific system in France. They required not only honours, but riches, great undertakings to occupy their activity, and nations to spoil to satisfy their covetousness. He promised the soldiers their part of the booty, he even accustomed them to take it for themselves by incessantly repeating that war ought to nourish war, and by obliging them to live by requisitions and pillage,[1] not only in the enemy's country, but often upon our own territory. When Prince Eugène recoiled from laying upon his Italian subjects these heavy burdens, Napoleon laughed at his scruples and gave him orders to proceed by means of requisitions. 'I do the same in Alsace,' he wrote, '. . . the prices are such that we cannot think of paying. . . . Do not believe that these measures displease the country; the people grumble, but they do not mean what they say. . . . I am surprised that your minister of war has not enlightened you on this point, he who made war for so long with us!'[2] When Marshal Bernadotte paid ready money in a *neutral* country which he crossed in contempt of all kind of right, Napoleon reprimanded him, forgetting that he had himself recommended this precaution. 'You have rather spoilt the Elector of Hesse-Cassel, if it is true that you have paid ready money. If I had anticipated this, I should have written to you to pay with bills.'[3] To pay with bills was a mode of speech, which proverbially signified not to pay at all. These proceedings engendered a strong spirit of rapine and cupidity in the army, and Napoleon openly encouraged it in the chiefs, though he punished them by the most insulting accusations if they exceeded the limit of what suited him. Was it not a new and significant fact that, at the moment of entering on a campaign, he could dream of offering a general-in-chief, like Masséna, *a present of fifty thousand francs* 'as a mark of esteem'?[4] Whatever may still have been their intelli-

[1] See especially upon this point *Souvenirs militaires de Fezensac.*
[2] Napoleon to Prince Eugène, September 22, 1805.
[3] Napoleon to Bernadotte, October 2.
[4] Napoleon to Prince Eugène, September 18.

gence and energy, an army upon whom such motives were brought to play could not fail sooner or later to be struck in that last kind of virtue which is called military virtue.

Napoleon's seven *corps d'armée* had almost achieved their movement before Mack, who was still stationary at Ulm, appeared even to suspect its aim. This general continued imperturbably to face the Black Forest, guarding the Iller from Ulm to Memmingen. On learning that some French detachments had appeared in Bavaria, Mack had sent his lieutenant, Kienmayer, to Donauwörth, with eight or ten thousand men, to hold both the bridges of the Danube, and those of its tributary the Lech, which were not less important to him. But his security was still undisturbed, when, on the 6th of October, Soult's advance-guard, debouching upon the plain of Nordlingen, came in sight of Donauwörth, and was quickly followed by the corps of Marshals Ney and Lannes, and Murat's cavalry. This cavalry formed of itself a separate corps of about twelve thousand men, and was destined to play the most important part in a campaign in which rapidity of movements was everything, Napoleon having announced beforehand 'that he reckoned on making this war more with his soldiers' legs than with their arms.' Kienmayer was not in a position to defend the Danube and the Lech against such forces; if he had done so successfully upon one point, he would have been outnumbered on all the others by Davoust's corps which was marching upon Neuburg, and by Marmont and Bernadotte, who were advancing upon Ingolstadt. All that he could do was to withdraw precipitately to Munich, after a feeble effort to dispute with us the bridges of the Danube at Donauwörth, and that of the Lech at Rain.

The right bank of the Danube was immediately overrun by our troops, and from this moment Mack's fate became most critical. He was still so far from understanding his position, that on the 8th of October, while all issues were successively closing up before him, he wrote '*that never had an army been stationed in a better manner to insure its superiority.*'[1] Soult went to occupy Augsburg; Bernadotte

[1] General Danilewski: *Rélation de la Campagne de* 1805.

and Wrède's Bavarian corps were sent from Ingolstadt to Munich, to re-establish the elector there, and to make head against any Austrian or Russian army that should come to succour Ulm. They remained on the left bank; he had to go as far up as Günzburg, an important point for the investment of Ulm, upon which also the corps of Lannes and Murat were directed, but by the right bank. In operating their movement, these latter met, on the 8th of October, at Wertingen, a corps of about twelve thousand men whom Mack had sent very tardily to support Kienmayer. Energetically attacked by Murat's cavalry and Oudinot's grenadiers, enveloped by superior forces, they only escaped with difficulty, leaving us two thousand prisoners.

This little struggle was the first affair of the campaign, and it was only by those who returned from it that Mack and the Archduke Ferdinand, who shared with him the command of the army of Ulm, at length learned their true position. From the outset, the disproportion of forces and the disadvantage of the situation of the Austrian generals were such, that it was no longer a question for them whether they could win, but whether they could escape. The campaign had scarcely opened; their army, though weakened by the loss of Kienmayer's corps, was still almost intact, and they suddenly discovered themselves to be in a desperate condition, surrounded by a formidable enemy, in consequence of secret movements of which they had perceived nothing and suspected nothing; exposed, in a word, to one of the most terrifying military surprises of which history bears record.

Napoleon had removed his head-quarters to Donauwörth. His first bulletin, dated from Nordlingen, a few miles distant, the 7th of October, before the affair of Wertingen, concluded with these significant words: 'The enemy has no time to lose if he would avoid utter destruction.' In traversing Germany, he had seen all the princes whom he had, of free will or by force, drawn into his alliance. At Louisburg, in particular, he had endeavoured to obtain an ascendency over the Elector of Wurtemberg, who had been

hitherto wavering and even angry at the want of ceremony with which our army had treated his capital and his states. He won this prince by the perspective of the advantages that he promised him, but the alliances that he thus conquered in Germany had more show than reality, for their effect was to render the sovereigns suspicious in the eyes of their own subjects, and odious to the rest of Germany. A very grave event occurred just then, which showed him how little he could count upon the forbearance which he attributed to Prussia. Several of his corps, in order to gain one or two marches towards the Danube, had traversed the marquisate of Anspach, a territory neutralised by Prussia, and which it would moreover have been very easy to avoid. Napoleon, though warned by the elector, when only one column had crossed this frontier, still persisted in sending on the whole of Bernadotte's corps, alleging, very incorrectly, 'that it was impossible to do otherwise.'[1] He wrote a few days later to the king of Prussia, excusing himself on the ground that he was not aware, when he gave the order, of the neutralisation of the territory of Anspach, formerly open to belligerents; but the mischief was done. Following the violation of the equally neutral territory of Hesse-Cassel, it proved that Napoleon was incapable of moderating his habits of violence and encroachment, even at junctures when he had the greatest interest in restraint. His apology was badly received at Berlin, for it was impossible to believe it to be sincere. M. de Hardenberg, in reply to Napoleon's letter, affirmed positively that he had himself pointed out upon a map to Duroc and Laforest the limits of the neutralised territory.[2] This event happened very opportunely for the allies, who had exasperated the king of Prussia by the menaces they had used in the hope of overcoming his indecision. In his irritation against them, this prince had ordered the mobilisation of 80,000 men, to throw them upon the Vistula in front of the Russian army of Warsaw. On learning the affair of Anspach, he marched them upon the southern frontier, openly announced that he

[1] Napoleon to Otto, October 3.
[2] Schœll: *Histoire abrégée des Traités*, vol. viii.

should require satisfaction, and accepted an interview with Alexander.

Napoleon knew too well the vacillating policy of the king of Prussia to be greatly alarmed at his threats; he, however, exaggerated the importance of the theatrical stroke upon which he counted to cool this warlike ardour. Each day brought him new success, each day the line that surrounded the Austrian army drew closer round Ulm. In his march towards Ulm, by the left bank of the Danube, Ney had occupied Langenau; he had afterwards established himself astride on the river, by taking Günzburg, after one of the most brilliant contests, in which the demoralisation that had taken possession of the Austrians was shown by the feebleness of their resistance,[1] for they had that day a great numerical superiority over Ney.

They had been forced, in fact, at length to open their eyes before the overwhelming evidence of a peril which the last soldier could understand as clearly as the chiefs of the army. Instead of facing the Black Forest, which would have been their natural position in an ordinary war, they now turned their backs on it, supporting themselves upon the Iller, in the situation that we ought to have occupied ourselves, having their left at Ulm and their right at Memmingen; and they saw successively closed before them all the routes by which they might have effected their retreat.

After the affair of Günzburg, Ney had occupied with two of his divisions Albeck and Elchingen, on the left bank of the Danube. He united himself on the right bank with the corps of Lannes and the cavalry of Murat, who had taken up their positions from Leipheim to Burgau; Soult moved from Landsberg towards Memmingen to cut off Mack's communication with the Tyrol, where the Archduke John was with 20,000 men. Napoleon was at Augsburg with his guards and Marmont's corps; lastly, at Dachau and at Munich were the corps of Davoust, of Bernadotte, and of the Bavarians, ready to march upon the Russian army, which was still a great distance from the theatre of the movement. Whichever side Mack turned, he saw

[1] Fezensac: *Souvenirs militaires.*

before him or on his flank corps of the enemy ready to stop him. Even supposing that despair had inspired him with the foolish idea of retiring upon Switzerland or the Black Forest, he would have fallen in with Augereau's corps, which having arrived the last, because it had come farthest, was still at Freiburg. It is true the route of the Tyrol was still open; he might there have joined the little army that occupied it, and thence have gained the army of the Archduke Charles; but this retreat, in a country soon to be without outlets, where he would have been followed, perhaps even forestalled, presented the greatest difficulties; and it was moreover very late to take this resolution, for Soult already threatened Memmingen.

Still, however admirably formed may have been the net that his terrible adversary had thrown around him, there was yet one weak point. For the execution of this plan, so marvellously conceived, a fault had been committed, and an energetic and resolute man, by taking advantage of it, might have made Napoleon regret the too great extent of his operations and the excessive dispersion of his *corps d'armée*. This weak point of our line of investment was exactly that which they had just caused to be occupied, on the left bank of the Danube at Albeck, by the divisions of Dupont and Baraguay d'Hilliers. These divisions were insufficient to bar the passage to the Austrian army. If Mack had thrown himself upon them with all his united forces, it is not improbable that he would have crushed them before the arrival of any succour, that he would have succeeded in gaining Aalen and Nordlingen, and, from thence, Bohemia, where he would have joined hands with the second Russian army. This fault arose from the preconceived opinion that Napoleon had of Mack's projects. That general could only, according to him, effect his retreat upon the Tyrol. As early as the 8th of October, when he sent Ney upon Günzburg, he ordered Berthier to write to him: 'His Majesty does not think the enemy *will be foolish enough to cross over to the left bank of the Danube*, since all his magazines are at Memmingen, and his greatest interest is not to separate himself from the Tyrol.' He did

not believe, he added, that the enemy would be *stupid* enough to withdraw by Aalen and Nordlingen; if, however, he should commit this act of folly, Baraguay d'Hilliers would only have to retreat before him, and pick up by the way the detachments that had remained behind upon these different points. But these were not enough to stop the Austrian army. This preconceived opinion of Napoleon became the principal cause of a still graver fault, of which it is customary to throw the whole blame upon Murat, since the eminent historian of the epoch, himself a witness and actor in the memorable circumstances, has not hesitated to impute it to this marshal.[1] The Emperor, in order to give more unity to the operations of the three corps that were nearest to Ulm, had very imprudently confided the command to his brother-in-law Murat, an incomparable cavalry general, but a man who had no capacity for dealing with great operations, and who was certainly inferior in this respect to Lannes and Ney, who were obliged to submit to his plans. The first use that Murat made of his authority was to give Ney orders to recall, upon the right banks of the Danube, the only two divisions that had remained upon the left bank, in order to throw himself with all his united forces upon the Iller, where he supposed the enemy to be retreating, to regain Memmingen, and, from thence, the Tyrol. But in this he can only be reproached with having interpreted too literally his instructions, and shared Napoleon's error, instead of remedying it, as a more intelligent chief would have done. The idea that Mack was going to retreat upon the Tyrol had taken such root in the Emperor's mind, that after the affair of Günzburg, the 10th of October, at six o'clock in the morning, he ordered Berthier to write to Ney to *take possession of Ulm*, which he supposed to be evacuated by the Austrian army, and to set out immediately in pursuit of Mack *upon Memmingen or any other point to which the enemy had fled.*[2]

[1] General Jomini, then a staff officer in Ney's corps. See *La Vie politique et militaire de Napoléon.*

[2] This letter was printed in the *Mémoires*, published in the name of Marshal Ney, by his family.

Ney, who fully understood the importance of the position of Albeck, in the event of the enemy endeavouring to escape by Bohemia, vainly tried to change Murat's resolution. There was so violent an altercation between them, that Ney would have followed it immediately by a challenge, had he not been reminded that, in presence of the enemy, his first duty was to obey. He then consented to give orders[1] to Generals Dupont and Baraguay d'Hilliers to cross to the right bank with their troops, and he wrote at the same time to Berthier to inform him of the danger of the situation. This danger was so great that Dupont was not able to completely execute his movement. He had scarcely quitted Albeck, on his way towards the Danube, when he fell in, at Haslach, with a corps of about twenty-five thousand men under the orders of the Archduke Ferdinand. Incapable of taking a bold resolution, receiving the most contradictory advice, hampered, moreover, in the exercise of a command that he was obliged to share with the archduke and reconcile with the prescriptions of the Aulic Council, Mack, instead of uniting all his forces, and making a gap, either on the side of Bohemia or on the side of the Tyrol, had only sent to Albeck an isolated corps, rather, it would seem, to examine the route into Bohemia, than to open a passage. Dupont's division, though separated from Baraguay d'Hilliers' troops, who had remained behind, fought heroically throughout a whole day against triple forces, and repaired by their brave resistance an error that might have lost us all the fruit of the preceding combinations. Dupont was able to retreat to Albeck, and from thence to Langenau, with three thousand prisoners; and his weakness suggested to Mack no other idea than that of isolating him more and more from Ney, by occupying the following day, October 12th, the position of Elchingen, and burning the bridge below it.

Meanwhile, his situation had become more desperate at other points. Soult had at length appeared before Memmingen; Spangen, who occupied this place, capitulated on

[1] The order was given, though Jomini asserts that Ney disobeyed Murat. It is dated October 4.

the 13th, placing seven thousand prisoners in our hands. The marshal immediately marched upon Achstetten, in order to cut the route to Biberach, the only one by which the Austrians could gain the Tyrol. Napoleon had rushed from Augsburg to Pfaffenhofen with his guards; from thence he went in all haste to General Ney's head-quarters and ordered him to re-establish, at any cost, his communications with Dupont's division, by taking the position of Elchingen. He had already recalled Marmont towards the mouth of the Iller[1] to reinforce the investing army, which raised to at least a hundred thousand men the number of troops that were blockading Mack's army more and more closely.

For several days the weather had been dreadful, the rain made the roads impracticable, and our soldiers, in want of everything, were reduced to live by pillage; but now they were certain of victory. On the morning of the 14th of October Ney repaired, under the fire of the enemy, the bridge of Elchingen, of which the piles had not been burned. This perilous work was scarcely achieved, when he rushed across it at the head of his regiments. Arrived on the opposite bank, he climbed the steeps of Elchingen, took the village house by house, and carried the convent that crowns the height at the point of the bayonet. Having resolved to take up his position upon the plateau, he attacked the Austrians in a wood that they occupied close by; after a long resistance he drove them out of it, and threw them back upon Ulm, making three thousand prisoners. Meanwhile Dupont, still isolated, held his ground between Albeck and Langenau, against a corps that had left Ulm under the orders of General Werneck. The next day, the 15th, Ney took the plateau of Michelsberg, which overlooks Ulm, and after this the position became absolutely untenable for Mack. Werneck had been cut off from Ulm by the movements of our troops; his only thought now was to gain Bohemia, and he was soon joined by a numerous corps of cavalry, commanded by the Archduke Ferdinand, who had escaped from the place under cover of the night. Napoleon immediately despatched

[1] Fifth bulletin (*bis*) of the grand army.

Murat in hot pursuit, with his regiments of hussars and dragoons, and on the 16th of October he summoned the place. He sent for Prince de Lichtenstein to come to his head-quarters: he wished the Austrian army to capitulate, he said, because, 'if he took the place by assault, he should be obliged to do what he had done at Jaffa, where the garrison was put to the sword, and *that was the sad right of war.*'[1]

The story of this horrible butchery was perfectly true, and there was no reason to believe him incapable of doing the same thing again. Mack had lost his head for several days past. The account of Philippe de Ségur, who was sent to him for the parley, shows us a man whose reason was unsettled;[2] his soldiers were utterly demoralised; he saw himself shut up in a town without good fortifications, he had no longer any hope of being relieved in time, he wanted provisions, he had left a considerable number of prisoners in our hands, he was, moreover, weakened by the loss of two of his corps, the one that was flying into Bohemia, conducted by Werneck and the archduke, hotly pursued by Murat; the second, which had been sent to Biberach, and which, having succeeded in escaping Soult, was endeavouring to gain the Tyrol under the orders of Jellachich. After the usual protestations in such cases, Mack accepted with a kind of feverish joy a capitulation that, up to a certain point, concealed his shame under a conditional clause. He believed, or feigned to believe, in the expected appearance of the Russians, and engaged to render himself a prisoner with his army if he was not relieved before the 25th of October. The capitulation was signed on the 19th. The same day the news arrived that, the evening before, Werneck's corps, overtaken by Murat's cavalry, had laid down their arms at Nordlingen, and that the Archduke Ferdinand, closely pursued, would in all probability speedily share the same fate. Upon this news and the certainty he now felt of not being delivered in time

[1] Sixth bulletin.

[2] His report may be found in the *Mémorial du dépôt de la guerre*, vol. viii.

by the Russian army, which had not yet appeared upon the Inn, Mack consented to shorten the delay fixed by the capitulation. On the 20th of October 1805 the remnant of the Austrian army filed past before the conqueror, at the foot of St. Michelsberg, according to a humiliating custom, fallen into disuse, more difficult to bear than defeat itself, and one that increased the evils of war without any other compensation than the vain satisfaction of self-love.

This first act of the campaign had been marvellous for rapidity and precision, and its results were such that they could dispense with the general exaggerations of the bulletins. Of an army of 80,000 men there only remained a few remnants scattered in every direction: Kienmayer's corps beyond the Inn, Jellachich's in the Tyrol, and in Bohemia a few squadrons of cavalry that the Archduke Ferdinand had succeeded in saving from Murat's pursuit; in all about 20,000 men, who had only escaped us to go and carry into all the provinces of the Empire the profound demoralisation with which they were struck. We had made about 20,000 prisoners in the different engagements that preceded the capitulation of Ulm; the number of troops in the place may perhaps be estimated at 26,000.[1] The capitulation gives the names of their regiments, but not their numbers; on this point we may refer to the second declaration of Mack to Philippe de Ségur. He gives the number as 80,000 men, without counting the wounded. To these must be added an immense quantity of guns, flags, and ammunition. On all these points it is absolutely impossible to trust to Napoleon's estimate, which varies from hour to hour, according to the presumed credulity of the persons he was addressing, or the interest he had in deceiving them. With his generals, Mack's army was always 80,000 men; with his other correspondents and in his bulletins it was always 100,000. For the number of prisoners made before the evacuation of Ulm, he goes so

[1] General Rapp, who, being an Alsatian, was sent to Ulm to ascertain the number of the garrison, naïvely relates that he reckoned 26,000 men, and that the day of the defiling of the troops there were 33,000 (*Mémoires*).

far as to estimate them at 50,000 men, in a letter to the Elector of Wurtemberg; lastly, for the number of the garrison, it varies from 15,000 to 30,000 men. With regard to his own losses, they only amounted, according to him, to *five hundred dead* and a thousand wounded.[1] In these varying estimates we recognise the man who only thought of producing an effect and never of the truth; but in this case the effect was sufficiently striking to have no need of the embellishments of fiction. The destruction of this army delivered over to Napoleon the Austrian monarchy, for the Austro-Russian corps, of which the advance-guard had at length arrived upon the Inn, worn out with fatigue, was too weak to cover Vienna, and on the other hand the army of the Archduke Charles, whom this victory had forced to retire in order to gain Hungary, could not arrive in time to effect his junction with the allies; it ran great risks of being taken between Masséna and Napoleon. Europe was stupefied. When Pitt first heard the news he refused to believe it; when it was confirmed by a Dutch paper, his countenance changed so as to fill those around him with a presentiment of his approaching end.[2]

At the beginning of the campaign, the king of Prussia, led away by anger, governed by the queen, whose influence was backed by a powerful party, swayed by the flatteries of Alexander, who had sworn him an eternal friendship upon the tomb of the great Frederick, was on the point of throwing himself into the arms of the coalition. M. d'Haugwitz and the partisans of the French Alliance were publicly disgraced, and every one in Berlin expected to see the Prussian army march to succour Austria. The news of the capitulation of Ulm considerably cooled these ardent dispositions, and Alexander, in spite of the seductions of his insinuating character, in spite of the ease with which he sacrificed to the rancour of Prussia the Prince Czartoryski, the principal partisan of the policy of intimidation,[3] could only obtain

[1] Sixth bulletin.

[2] Lord Malmesbury's Journal, quoted by Lord Stanhope: 'W. Pitt and his Times.'

[3] Correspondence of Prince Czartoryski with Alexander, published by Ch. de Mazade.

from the king of Prussia a kind of conditional treaty of alliance. This treaty was not to be put in execution till after a fresh offer of mediation to the Emperor Napoleon. It was kept quite secret, and signed at Potsdam the 3d of November. It stipulated that the Russian army should only enter into the campaign a month after the departure of Haugwitz, who was charged with proposing the mediation. At the same time, our representatives at the court of Berlin, Duroc and Laforest, were informed that in retaliation for the violation of the territory of Anspach, Silesia would be opened to the Russians, and that Prussia was going to occupy Hanover provisionally, respecting, however, the garrison that we had left at Hameln.[1]

While this fresh storm was gathering against him, Napoleon, who had no suspicion of its gravity, and who still thought that the king of Prussia would content himself with occupying Hanover, endeavoured to fascinate him by that mixture of caresses and threats, so powerful with undecided characters, a terrible art in which he has never been equalled. Duroc, whom he recalled, was to see the king before his departure, assure him of Napoleon's constant friendship, tell him that the Emperor was *misunderstood, that he was a man of feeling still more than a politician;* that the affair of Anspach was only a pretext made use of by his enemies; that with regard to Hanover, *he did not care about it, but that he was obliged to observe the forms;* that Frederick with Prussia had resisted the whole of Europe; that he was more powerful than Frederick and France than Prussia;[2] finally, that his eagles had never suffered an affront, and that they would not suffer one upon the Weser. A few days after, he wrote the king a letter of apology in his own hand, assuring him of his regret, of his inviolable attachment, and declaring that he was ready to do 'everything in his power to regain the friendship and confidence of the king.'[3] But it is doubtful whether this letter was ever sent; in reality Napoleon was convinced that, as far as

[1] Schœll: *Histoire abrégée des Traités*, vol. viii.
[2] Napoleon to Duroc, October 24.
[3] Napoleon to the king of Prussia, October 27.

Prussia was concerned, he could satisfy her with fine phrases, especially if, as he believed certain, he succeeded in gaining fresh victories. At all events, the Prussian army could not enter the campaign for a considerable time, and before then he hoped to crush the Russians, as he had annihilated the Austrians.

Napoleon's imagination, always anticipating the future and devouring beforehand the fruits of victory, was much more apt to get intoxicated with success than to mistrust fortune. The extraordinary, the almost incredible success of his grand stroke at Ulm, his presence at the head of more than two hundred thousand men on the frontier of these vast states that no force could any longer dispute with him, had already excited his ambition beyond all belief. He no longer treated the secondary States of Germany as allies, but as vassals. He assured the Elector of Bavaria of his *protection*,[1] and printed in his ninth bulletin the following words pronounced before Mack's staff. 'I advise my brother, the emperor of Germany, to make peace quickly! It is the moment to remember that all empires have a term; the idea that the end of the dynasty of Lorraine is at hand ought to alarm him!' He meditated a fresh distribution of the Germanic territory, which would permit him to create *principalities* in favour of his marshals. These projects were not, as is generally believed, subsequent to Austerlitz; they were made the very day after the capitulation of Ulm, as is proved by a letter from Talleyrand, dated from Munich, October 27th, 1805. 'No more an emperor of Germany!' he wrote to M. de Hauterive; 'three emperors in Germany: France, Austria, and Prussia. No more diets of Ratisbon.' He then explained the basis of the *federative system* of France, the proposed plan of fiefs held under the crown of France; he enumerated the losses that were to be imposed on Austria, that of Venice, of the Italian Tyrol, of the German Tyrol, the Breisgau, the Ortenau, the Vorarlberg, and Hither Austria. All that, he said, *against my advice.* Talleyrand had in reality vainly endeavoured to combat Napoleon's adventurous ideas. He wished the

[1] Napoleon to the Elector of Bavaria, October 23.

Emperor to give up the attempt to gain the treacherous alliance of Prussia, and to ally himself to Austria by treating her with generosity after victory. In order to make a friend of her, it sufficed, according to him, to extend a hand to this vanquished power, and to offer her compensations for the sacrifices that they had a right to demand of her. She would cede Venice which would be declared independent, and her possessions in Suabia, which were an eternal cause of discord; but Napoleon, on his side, would relinquish the crown of Italy, he would engage to give Wallachia and Moldavia to Austria, which two acquisitions would embroil this power with Russia. Austria, by the force of things, would thus become our natural ally.[1] She would be detached from England; the Russians would be thrown back into Asia; and the peace of the Continent would be assured for more than a century.

This system of alliance may be disputed, another may have been preferable, but what Talleyrand felt with his customary sound judgment was, that it was necessary for us to gain some ally at any cost, unless we wished to remain isolated in Europe and see the result of our victories constantly called in question. This necessity Napoleon was willing to admit in principle, but when it came to the application, his inordinate covetousness always hindered him from making concessions which alone could insure him the serious and durable alliance of any European power.

Such were the ambitious thoughts that filled Napoleon's mind, when he left Munich to march upon Vienna. This capital was only covered by the feeble army of Kutuzoff, of about forty thousand Russians,[2] to which were added fifteen or twenty thousand Austrians under the orders of Kienmayer and Merfeldt. These troops, exhausted by long marches, were incapable of disputing against us the passage of the numerous affluents of the Danube which, at certain distances,

[1] These ideas are given in a letter from Talleyrand to M. de Hauterive, dated October 11, 1805. He had already explained them in a memoir addressed from Strasburg to Napoleon: Mignet, *Notice sur Talleyrand.*

[2] Danilewski.

formed a natural barrier easy to defend even against superior forces. When Bernadotte's advance-guard appeared upon the Inn, they found the Austro-Russian army retreating on all points. Nevertheless Kutuzoff, in compliance with the wishes of the emperor of Austria, who persisted in hoping, against all probability, that the Archduke Charles would arrive in time to cover Vienna, consented to remain on the right bank of the Danube, instead of retiring by Bohemia, which was his most direct route to rejoin the second army of Alexander. Murat was at the head of the French army with his cavalry; next came the corps of Bernadotte, Marmont, Davoust, and Lannes, supporting their left on the Danube, their right on the last spur of the Noric Alps. Soult brought up the march with the reserves. Ney had been sent with ten thousand men into the Tyrol to drive out the Archduke John; he was to be supported by Augereau, whose corps had remained behind.

We thus passed successively the Inn, the Salza, and the Traun, occupying almost without striking a blow places of the first importance, such as Braunau and Salzburg. In the small partial combats which took place with the advance-guard, however, the Russians displayed a vigour and solidity that we had not met with among the Austrians in this campaign.

Napoleon arrived at Linz the 4th of November. He there received General Giulay, who brought him a letter containing the proposal of an armistice from the emperor of Austria. But the Emperor Francis was not sufficiently prepared for the conditions that Napoleon intended to impose upon him for such an agreement to be possible: the cession of Venice and the Tyrol was too great a sacrifice to be accepted at once. Francis could not even hope to gain time by discussing these hard conditions, for the relentless perspicacity of his enemy required as a pledge, before any discussion, an immediate separation of the Austrian cause from that of Alexander. 'The Emperor Francis ought not,' wrote Napoleon, 'to make peace depend upon another power, whose interests are so different: this war,' he said, 'is a fancy war for Russia; for your Majesty and myself it is a war that absorbs all our means, all our

thoughts, and all our faculties.'[1] Such premisses expressed in these general terms were certainly admissible, but the consequences that he pretended to draw from them were too burdensome to appear acceptable, in spite of the friendly protestations with which the letter was filled. This attempt at a negotiation led therefore to nothing, and did not for an instant suspend the march of our troops.

From Linz, the chain of the Noric Alps gradually approaches the Danube, till close to Vienna, where the last spur of the Wiener-Wald runs down to the brink of the river, so that the valley becomes more and more narrow as it nears the capital. The army having to fear both an improbable, but still possible, surprise from the army of the Archdukes Charles and John, that was supposed to have arrived in Styria, and a more serious resistance from Kutuzoff, who could take advantage of the unevenness of this mountainous country, Napoleon sent Marmont to Leoben by Steyer, in order to intercept the route from Styria to Vienna. He next ordered a corps of about twenty-thousand men, under the orders of Mortier, to cross to the left side of the Danube; this he supported by an improvised flotilla which would enable the marshal to cross at any instant from one bank to the other, and harass the Russians in their line of retreat; lastly, he advanced with precaution upon Mölk and St. Pölten with the rest of his army. Every one expected a battle at St. Pölten, a very strong position, the best that could be chosen to defend Vienna; but the Russians confined themselves to contests that were strictly necessary to insure their retreat. Upon our right, at Mariazell, Davoust surprised and put to rout a column of the enemy that was trying to gain Styria. At Amstetten Prince Bagration opposed Murat with great firmness, in order to aid Kutuzoff in his embarrassed march. At St. Pölten the Russian army halted afresh as if they would give battle, but they avoided it by suddenly turning round, and instead of continuing the route to Vienna they crossed the Danube at Krems, burning after them the only bridge that existed between Linz and Vienna (Nov. 9, 1805).

[1] Napoleon to the emperor of Austria, November 8.

The attack that Napoleon feared upon his flank from the archdukes during his march upon Vienna did not take place, and Marmont was able to advance not only to Leoben, but as far as Grätz, without encountering any serious obstacle. As Napoleon had foreseen, our sudden invasion into the heart of the hereditary provinces had forced the Archduke Charles to retire; but not wishing to run the risk of being enclosed between Napoleon's army and that of Masséna, he had retired not upon Styria, but into Hungary, which obliged him to go more out of his way and to give up all idea of relieving Vienna. For a long time stationary upon the Adige, although he had an army of eighty thousand men, independent of the twenty thousand that were cantoned in the Tyrol, to oppose the fifty thousand men of Masséna, the Archduke Charles had not made use of his advantages, either because he did not think he was sufficiently prepared or because the Aulic Council had compelled him to make his operations subordinate to those of the army of Bavaria. In this latter case the fault was inexcusable, for it was reducing the strongest army to the defensive, and taking the offensive with the weakest. However this may be, nothing suited Masséna better than such inaction on the part of an adversary who had such a great superiority over him. He commenced by seizing, the 18th of October, the part of Verona that was occupied by the Austrians, by means of a nocturnal surprise that Napoleon had suggested to him. After having thus consolidated his position upon the Adige, he waited events in presence of the archduke's army strongly intrenched at Caldiero, at the very gates of Verona. On the 28th of October Masséna learned the capitulation of Ulm; he immediately understood all the importance of this victory, and judging that the archduke was about to be forced to commence his retreat, he did not hesitate to attack him in his formidable positions. For two successive days, the 30th and 31st of October, Masséna assailed him in his camp with incredible violence, without obtaining over him any marked advantage, but he so far impeded his retreat as to constrain him to sacrifice a whole brigade in order to assure his

march. Recalled to the relief of the threatened monarchy, the archduke retired rapidly upon the Brenta, then upon the Piave, followed step by step by Masséna. On the 12th of November he was upon the Tagliamento, where he sustained against one troop a brilliant rear-guard combat. It was there that, after some hesitation, he decided to go into Hungary, taking the road through Laybach and Carniola. In his retreat he picked up the scattered troops of his brother, the Archduke John, whose *corps d'armée*, driven from the Tyrol by Ney and Augereau, had been even worse treated than his own.

In the Tyrol as in Italy success had surpassed all expectation. It was doubtless due in some measure to the skill, the courage, and the keen sight of these incomparable lieutenants; but it was still more to that vast conception which, embracing at a single glance the whole of these operations and their immense theatre, had neglected the secondary points, and thrown upon the principal one, that is to say upon the Danube, an irresistible mass, whose impulsion was to carry with it all the rest. The stratagems which covered the march of our army from Boulogne upon the Rhine, the idea of cutting Mack's seventy thousand men with an army of more than two hundred thousand, have excited more admiration than they are worth. They present no great difficulty either in the conception or the execution, but what only a powerful military genius could grasp with such force was the chain which united this operation with those of our other armies, and the precise point at which to strike in order to make the rest of the Austrian defences fall at one blow.

We left the grand army about fifteen leagues from Vienna, in front of Krems, to which place Kutuzoff had suddenly escaped, burning the bridge over which he had effected his passage. This sudden movement immediately brought him face to face with Mortier, who was on the left side of the bank of the Danube, isolated from the rest of the army. Before he had been able to regain the flotilla which was to insure his retreat, this marshal, who, to add to his misfortunes, was for the time separated from one of

his divisions, that of Dupont, found himself all at once attacked in front and in rear by a great part of the Russian army, in the defiles which are commanded by the ruins of the château of Dürrenstein, celebrated by the captivity of King Richard the Lion-hearted. Our soldiers, who had at first taken the offensive, soon perceived that they had to do with more than half the Russian army, but without troubling themselves about its enormous superiority, they heroically repelled its attacks, and fought the whole day against the troops that surrounded them. When the evening came they resolved to retrace their steps in order to rejoin Dupont's division; they opened a passage with their bayonets in a fresh contest that was more sanguinary, and were soon hailed by the cries of joy from their fellow-soldiers, who on their side had attacked the rear of one of the Russian columns in order to come to their relief. Mortier thus escaped Kutuzoff's army, by recrossing to the right side of the Danube by means of the flotilla.

Meanwhile Murat, who was with our advance-guard, finding nobody before him, was galloping on the road to Vienna, drawing the whole army after him. It was on him that, in his bad humour, Napoleon laid the blame of the misfortune that he anticipated for Mortier,—a misfortune of which he had himself been the principal author, by exposing this isolated corps on the left bank to the united attacks of all the Russian army. He reproached him in the hardest terms for his lightness, his *heedlessness*, and his eagerness *to thrust the army into Vienna.* 'You had, moreover, received orders,' he added, 'to pursue the Russians closely. It is a singular manner of pursuing them to get away from them by forced marches. The Russians can thus do what they please with Marshal Mortier's corps, which would not have been the case if you had executed my orders.'[1] Murat had after all done the best thing, for there were no bridges except at Linz and Vienna, and as the flotilla had not as yet descended the river lower than Krems, and contained moreover a very insufficient number of boats for a rapid passage, he would have found it very difficult to pursue

[1] Napoleon to Murat, November 11, 1805.

the Russians *closely*. But somebody had to be responsible for this fault, which was only a repetition of the abandonment of Dupont at Albeck, and Napoleon took care not to admit that he himself was the author of it.

On the morning of the 13th of November Murat appeared before Vienna. The Emperor Francis had taken the humane but impolitic resolution to spare the inhabitants the horrors of a siege, which could not, it is true, have lasted more than a few days, but which would have rendered an inestimable service to the cause of the allies at a time when every moment was of consequence to them. But leaving at Vienna Count de Würbna, to negotiate with the French their pacific entry into the capital, the Emperor of Austria had confided to Prince Auersperg the mission of guarding the great bridges of the Danube, which were of the highest importance to us. Napoleon had recommended Murat to get possession of these bridges at any price,[1] in order to return immediately to the pursuit of the Russians upon the road to Moravia. Taking advantage of the sort of suspension of arms that the parleys relative to the occupation of Vienna had established between the two armies, Lannes, Murat, and Belliard, followed by some staff-officers, and at a short distance by a regiment of hussars, advanced towards the great bridge, their hands behind them like inoffensive promenaders. They entered into conversation with the commandant of the detachment, announced to him that the war was over and an armistice concluded, expressed surprise at the preparations for blowing up the bridges, crossed it with him, while their troops advanced from their side, throwing the powder into the water and cutting the conductors. The Austrian commandant perceiving the trick, was going to order his soldiers to fire the mines, but his interlocutors seized him by the collar. Then Prince Auersperg arrived, to whom they repeated the tale of the armistice. During this time several detachments of our army crossed the bridge, the Austrian soldiers were surrounded and disarmed.[2]

[1] Fact proved in a letter from Napoleon to Soult, November 12.

[2] *Mémoires* of General Rapp.

This disloyal deception was unworthy of generals so intrepid and already so illustrious. Moreover, a few days later, the Russians very cleverly proved to Murat himself that they were our masters in that kind of play. That marshal, impatient to regain the good graces of Napoleon, had no sooner got possession of the bridge than he set off in all haste for the road that leads from Vienna into Bohemia, crossing at Hollabrunn the one that goes from Krems into Moravia. He hoped to forestall the Russian army at the junction of these two roads, which would thus find itself enclosed between Bernadotte's corps that Napoleon was to send over to the left bank, by means of the flotilla, and Murat's corps, sustained by that of Lannes. After the disappearance of Mortier, Kutuzoff, believing that the bridges of Vienna were destroyed, had remained some little time at Krems, in order to recover from his fatigue; so that, notwithstanding the distance he was in advance of Murat, the latter arrived with his advance-guard at Hollabrunn, the point where the two roads met, almost at the same time as the Russians. Encouraged by the success of his ruse on the bridge of Vienna, and wishing to give Lannes' troops time to join him, he repeated to Generals Nostitz and Bagration, who were charged to defend Hollabrunn, the story of the conclusion of the armistice with Austria. The Austrian Nostitz was duped, and retired, allowing us to pass; but the subtle pupil of Souwaroff, warned by his lieutenant Bagration, feigned not only to be aware of the negotiation but to be himself charged to carry it on for the Russian corps. He despatched to Murat General Winzengerode, who amused him with fine words, and presented himself in the name of the Emperor Alexander. Murat, caught in his own snare, sent a courier to Schönbrunn to consult Napoleon upon the conditions of the pretended armistice. Meanwhile Kutuzoff got away into Moravia, only leaving before us a curtain of troops, under the command of Bagration, who had orders to hold out to the last extremity. The next day Murat, undeceived by Napoleon, attacked with nearly forty thousand men this feeble detachment that every one considered sacrificed. Bagration, enveloped on all sides,

received without wavering the masses that overwhelmed him; nearly half his soldiers allowed themselves to be massacred, with a stoicism characteristic of the Russian soldiers, in order to insure Kutuzoff's retreat. At nightfall Bagration formed a column with those that remained, and cut his way through to go and join the Russian army. This brilliant feat was the prelude of the celebrity that this general was to acquire later at our expense (November 16).[1]

Napoleon had been at the palace of Schönbrunn since the 14th of November. He was actively engaged in rectifying the position of his army, in securing provisions of which they had more than once stood in need during these rapid marches in the depth of an early winter, and in regulating the administration of the conquered country; this consisted principally in raising a contribution of a hundred millions, which he hastened to levy upon Austria. Tranquil with regard to the situation of the *corps d'armée* that were pursuing Kutuzoff's reduced army in Moravia, he disposed fan-wise round Vienna those that he had under his hand, in such a manner that they could support each other and guarantee him from all surprise. Davout extended from Presburg to Neustadt, watching Hungary; Marmont established himself firmly on a ridge of the Styrian Alps, from Leoben to Semmering, ready to stretch to Masséna's army, which was expected to appear from day to day. Bernadotte and the Bavarians, leaving Lannes, Murat, and Soult to pursue the enemy, posted themselves at Iglau to keep an eye on the débouchés of Bohemia, where one of the Archduke Frederick's corps had appeared. This army, apparently so dispersed, could be concentrated in a very few days and compose an irresistible mass; it was vigilant at all points.

Napoleon ordered his soldiers to treat with great gentleness the inhabitants of the conquered country, particularly those of Vienna; he wished the Austrians to feel the difference between enemies such as the French and friends like the Russians. The Russians, badly received by the population that was forced to nourish them, had avenged themselves in the usual manner by the most brutal pro-

[1] Jomini, Mathieu Dumas, Danilewski.

ceedings. Napoleon turned to the best account this mutual resentment, in which he saw the omen of a rupture between the allies; he exaggerated the cruelty of the one and the complaints of the other. He referred in all his bulletins to the barbarity of the Russians, to their devastations, to the horrible excesses that they had committed in the Austrian provinces, together with the maledictions that were heaped upon them wherever they had passed. He appealed at the same time to public opinion, endeavouring, as he had so often succeeded in doing, to excite the subjects against their Government, and to inflame popular passions by attributing very gratuitously to the bourgeois of Vienna partisan opinions and revolutionary sentiments. 'The discontent of the people is extremely great. They say at Vienna and in all the provinces *that they are badly governed*, that for the sole interest of England they have been drawn into an unjust and disastrous war. . . . The Hungarians complain of an *illiberal* government, that does nothing for their industry, and is uneasy at their national spirit. . . . They are persuaded that the Emperor Napoleon is the friend of all the nations and all great ideas. . . . Is it not time that princes listened to *the voice of their people*, and threw off the fatal influence of the English oligarchy?'[1]

These artifices were merely a repetition of those that he had employed, with various success, against Venice, Genoa, Egypt, Switzerland, Holland, and Spain, and it must be admitted that he took very little pains to vary the form; but this office of *liberator of the nations* began already to be distrusted even by those whom he sought to liberate, and the revolutionary provocatives of Napoleon only produced an impression of astonishment at Vienna. It was the same with his endeavours to excite hatred against the personages to whom he attributed the present war. He insulted them in his bulletins, according to his inveterate habit of holding up to the execration of nations all the illustrious foreigners whose patriotism or keen sight he had had to dread; but these outrages clumsily showered down were to become a title of honour. On seeing him extol the memory of the

[1] Twenty-second bulletin, November 13.

king, Maria-Theresa, in order to abuse and cry down all those who had shown in the Court of Austria a spark of the energy of this great sovereign, from Cobentzel down to the reigning empress and Mme. de Colloredo,[1] the Viennese were not blind to the intention by which he was actuated.

[1] Twenty-fourth bulletin, November 16.

CHAPTER III

TRAFALGAR—AUSTERLITZ

THE 18th of November Napoleon had already quitted Vienna, and was at Znaïm in Moravia, marching upon Brünn with a magnificent army to meet that of Alexander, his mind intoxicated with his prodigious success, and his head filled with the grandest projects, when Berthier quietly put into his hand, as he was sitting down to table, a despatch that was about to remind him that he was mortal. This despatch contained a summary account of the disaster of Trafalgar. If the intense egotism that possessed him had left any room for remorse, he would have bitterly experienced it at the news of this frightful destruction, for he could not but know that he alone was the author of it. But the only sentiment to which he was accessible was the wound of humiliated pride, and regret at seeing so precious an arm broken. He displayed no emotion, but concealed the news and contented himself with writing to Decrès 'that he should wait for more particulars before he formed a definite opinion *upon the nature of this affair*, and that it would moreover in no way change his plan of cruising.'[1] These were all the reflections that he made upon a catastrophe which had often been predicted by Decrès himself, by his most skilful admirals, and into which only his own blindness and infatuation had precipitated our navy. It is in reality impossible to admit the singular system which consists in throwing the responsibility of the defeat of Trafalgar in equal portions upon Napoleon, Villeneuve, and Decrès.[2]

[1] Napoleon to Decrès, November 18.

[2] Thiers: 'All parties contributed their share to produce a great

Napoleon was not one of the causes, nor even the principal cause of this lamentable event; he was the sole cause of it.

We have seen how Villeneuve, on hearing of the junction of Calder's and Nelson's fleets with that of Cornwallis before Brest, had resolved to go to Cadiz, instead of exposing his squadron to a destruction that he considered inevitable if he executed Napoleon's instructions. One thing is certain, and it cannot be too often remembered in justification of a man shamefully calumniated, and this is that if Villeneuve had obeyed Napoleon's orders in quitting Ferrol as promptly as he prescribed to him, his twenty-eight vessels, insufficiently victualled, would have run against a fleet at Brest which numbered thirty-five, and which would have destroyed them before Ganteaume could come to their relief. This unfortunate admiral had therefore rendered a first service to France by preserving her navy; he had rendered a second, and still greater, by hindering the foolish expedition to England, which would have deprived us of our only army at a time when the Russian and Austrian troops were marching against us. But this prudent conduct, consistent with the known inferiority of our navy, had wounded an ungovernable pride in its dearest illusions—a pride that already dreamed of conquering the world, and could not suffer to be shown the limits of its power. Therefore, although he returned to the true principles of maritime warfare,—at least in the situation in which we were placed, that is to say, although he gave up his great concentrations and agreed to act by separate squadrons, as Decrès and Ganteaume and all his admirals had incessantly advised him,—Napoleon had a morbid grudge against the man who had imposed this change upon him as a law even of necessity. He detested in Villeneuve the living demonstration of his long error, of his obstinate presumption, of the emptiness of his vaunted plans. Villeneuve personified in one sense the sharpest blow that fortune had hitherto inflicted upon him. He pretended to believe that a want of courage, or treachery, had alone hindered an officer from

disaster; Napoleon by his anger, Decrès by his concealment, and Villeneuve by his despair.'

fulfilling his mission, whose personal bravery was above suspicion. 'Villeneuve,' he wrote to Decrès, the 4th of September, 'is *a wretch who ought to be ignominiously cashiered.* He has no plan, no courage, no general interest; *he would sacrifice everything provided he saved his skin.*' Decrès, having tried to justify his friend, experienced the effects of the master's anger: 'I will dispense with telling you all I think of the letter you have written me. . . . Until you have found something plausible, I beg you will not speak to me of an affair so humiliating, nor remind me of *a man so cowardly.*'[1] To these insults he added the bitterest recriminations upon all Villeneuve's acts, without taking any account of the circumstances which had given rise to them.

A proof, however, that this anger was in a measure feigned, and that in reality he knew the worth of these accusations, is, that in spite of the complaints, the least of which was sufficient to bring Villeneuve before a council of war, he maintained him in his command. The 14th of September he sent him a direct and formal order to leave Cadiz with the combined squadron, to call at Carthagena for the Spanish vessels, then to proceed to Naples to support Saint-Cyr's corps, and do as much harm as possible to the English cruisers off Malta, and lastly, to retire to Toulon. Lest Villeneuve should be tempted to evade these orders, he added these significant words: '*Whenever you find the enemy in inferior force, you are to attack him without hesitating, and have a decisive affair with him.*'[2] The next day, September 15th, wishing, not to withdraw, as has been said, the command from Villeneuve, but to make this order still more imperative and urgent, he wrote to Decrès 'to send a special courier to Villeneuve to order him to execute this manœuvre; and,' he added, 'as his *extreme pusillanimity* will prevent his undertaking it, you will despatch Admiral Rosily to take the command of the squadron, and give him letters which will tell Villeneuve to come to France and give an account of his conduct.'[3]

[1] Napoleon to Decrès, September 8.
[2] Napoleon to Villeneuve, September 14.
[3] Napoleon to Decrès, September 15.

Rosily's mission, therefore, was a conditional one; it had no other object than to threaten; in case Villeneuve should be unwilling to execute Napoleon's orders, he was to force him to obey. Decrès could not do otherwise than transmit these orders, and confirm them by his own injunctions, when he sent Rosily into Spain; and this is what he did. If he had felt it his duty to refuse, he must have resigned his office as minister of the marine. But Napoleon's determination with regard to the squadron of Cadiz was so settled, that on November the 2d, in the midst of all the occupations that the march of his army into the heart of Germany gave him, he still found time to hurry Decrès: 'Let my squadrons leave,'[1] he wrote, 'let nothing stop them! I will not have my squadron remain at Cadiz!'[1]

His squadron had been destroyed nearly a fortnight before!

Villeneuve had suffered too keenly from the reproaches which he had incurred to expose himself to fresh ones. His convictions upon the issue of an encounter with the English fleet had not changed, but now he had to execute positive and urgent orders that it was impossible to evade, and it was no longer upon him that the responsibility of the disaster that he foresaw would fall. Before obeying, however, he wished, for his own justification as well as for that of his companions sacrificed like himself, to assemble a council of war composed of the principal officers of the two nations. The French and Spanish admirals and rear-

[1] All our histories in defence of the Empire are full of errors, both of facts and judgment, on this point. 'Napoleon,' says Thibaudeau, 'had given Decrès a *formal order* to recall Villeneuve to France, and despatch Rosily to take his place. . . . Decrès did not send Rosily into Spain; he *ordered his friend* Villeneuve to leave Cadiz,' etc.— 'Some one *was sent* to succeed Villeneuve,' says Bignon.— As for M. Thiers, he is better acquainted with the facts, but he reproaches Decrès 'with leaving things to themselves, instead of taking upon himself the *responsibility of directing them*.' That is to say, of disobeying Napoleon. But that is exactly what this historian reproaches Villeneuve with doing; he had, moreover, gained so little by it. He says, too, that the instructions of Villeneuve '*authorised* him to leave Cadiz.' On the contrary, never were orders more absolute, more threatening, or more peremptory.

admirals, consulted by him upon the situation of the combined fleet, *unanimously* declared that 'the vessels of both nations were for the most part *badly equipped;* that a portion of the crews had never *been trained at sea;* that, in short, they were not in a state to endure the services that were expected of them.' Villeneuve sent this report to Paris, adding to it a last supplication. 'I cannot believe,' he wrote to Decrès, 'that it was his Imperial Majesty's intention to expose the greater part of his naval forces to such a risk, and one that does not offer the chance of acquiring glory.' But Napoleon had beforehand rendered all remonstrance useless by despatching Rosily; for even if Villeneuve had pushed his abnegation so far as to wait for this admiral, and give up his command to him, with the certainty of seeing a sublime sacrifice transformed into an act of cowardice, this determination would not have saved the fleet, since Rosily was to execute exactly the same orders, and without delay. Warned in time of the speedy arrival of Rosily, and convinced that the giving up of the command to this admiral, who was, moreover, very inferior to himself in every respect, would have no effect upon the issue, Villeneuve no longer hesitated to rush into the abyss, in which he would at any rate find the means of vindicating his outraged honour. 'I should be happy,' he wrote to Decrès, 'to yield the first place to Rosily, if I were allowed to accept the second; but it would be too hard to lose all hope of having an opportunity of proving that I was worthy of a better fate.' He immediately began to make preparations for leaving to go and encounter the English fleet.

Nelson, who commanded the English squadron before Cadiz, had at first thirty vessels under his orders; he had given one to Calder to take him back to England, and he had afterwards sent six others to revictual at Tetuan and Gibraltar. Villeneuve had thirty-three ships at his disposal, he had then six more than his illustrious adversary, without counting five frigates and two brigs; but the greater part of these vessels were incapable of executing a manœuvre that was in the least complicated, especially in presence of the enemy; a part of the sailors, mostly Spanish, had never

seen the sea, and all were completely ignorant of the service that constitutes the principal strength of a man-of-war, that is to say, of the artillery. Neither a knowledge of manœuvres, nor precision and accuracy in shooting, can be acquired in the interior of a port. It is stated that in the battle of Trafalgar, the English marines fired nearly once a minute, while with ours there was an interval of more than three minutes between each discharge;[1] the English fired into the wood and the hull of the ships, which from the beginning of the action disorganised the batteries of their enemy; whilst the French, faithful to their old routine, shot at the rigging and tried to dismantle the vessels, which required an experience and skill that they did not possess.

As early as the 10th of October, Nelson, foreseeing that Villeneuve would speedily leave Cadiz, had addressed to his fleet the celebrated order of the day in which he explained to his officers the plan of battle which he afterwards followed, with the exception of a few modifications adopted on the spot. Convinced that Villeneuve would be forced to give battle with his vessels drawn up in a single line according to the rules of ancient tactics, he had resolved to attack the French fleet, not with a parallel line, but with two columns, which would steer upon it at a right angle, and afterwards 'extend in such a manner that the order of sailing might at the same time be the order of battle.' The first of these columns was to advance upon the centre, where our admiral's ship was stationed, while the second was to attack the rear-guard. These two points, invested successively by the whole of the English fleet, would be thus surrounded and cut off from the rest of the forces, and they would have time to capture or destroy this part of the combined squadron before the other could come to its relief. He reserved the easiest part of this double task for his colleague and friend Collingwood, who had such a superiority of forces over our rear, that a portion of his vessels would quickly become available to aid Nelson in the unequal struggle in which he was going to engage with the rest of our fleet. The admiral concluded his instructions

[1] Admiral Jurien de la Gravière: *Guerres Maritimes.*

with this excellent recommendation which applies to all battles, whether by land or by sea: 'As for captains, who during the combat are unable to perceive the admiral's signal, they cannot do amiss if they place their vessel alongside a vessel of the enemy.'

These were exactly the same words that Villeneuve was at the very moment addressing to the combined squadron. 'Every captain who is not under fire is not at his post,' he said, on his side, 'and a signal to recall him to it would be a blot on his scutcheon.' Villeneuve had half foreseen the manœuvre that Nelson was meditating, but he could not think of adopting fresh tactics with ships, some of which were setting sail for the first time, and which manœuvred with difficulty on the old system. He therefore resolved to keep to a proved method, which at least gave each vessel full play, and which might, moreover, have had its advantages, seeing the plan adopted by Nelson, had not our overwhelming inferiority placed us in a situation in which all methods would necessarily have failed. After finishing his preparations with the calmness and resolution of a man for whom a decision, even a desperate one, was a happiness, Villeneuve left Cadiz, the 20th of October, steering a southerly course to encounter Nelson, who was cruising off the Straits of Gibraltar. Nelson, informed of this by a frigate, immediately set out to meet us. During the night, the two fleets got much nearer together, lighting up their route with Bengal fire. On the 21st of October, at daybreak, our fleet descried the enemy about two leagues and a half to the west, a position which gave him the advantage of the wind over us, for the wind blew from the west. About four leagues off, to the south-east, was Cape Trafalgar. Villeneuve immediately gave the signal to form the line of battle; he ranged in the van all the ships of Gravina, which had hitherto formed a squadron of observation, not wishing, probably, that a number of vessels should have any pretext whatever for not fighting, as had so often been the case in our naval battles. He placed Rear-admiral Dumanoir in the rear, and took up his own position in the centre. This long

line, formed of thirty-three vessels, sailed thus from north to south, the head to Gibraltar, while Nelson's fleet advanced from the west in two columns.

From the direction that the enemy's squadron took, the experienced eye of Villeneuve soon discovered Nelson's plan. He comprehended that in attacking our rear with the bulk of his forces his adversary's aim was not only to isolate it in order to destroy it more easily, but that he wanted at the same time to cut off our retreat from Cadiz.[1] He immediately tacked about, and the fleet had thus the head to Cadiz instead of Gibraltar, so that the van became the rear, and the rear the van. In consequence of this manœuvre, our fleet kept its retreat upon Cadiz, and the points of attack of the English columns, bearing upon a line that was no longer moving from north to south, but from south to north, were necessarily changed to our advantage. The two columns were already approaching as rapidly as the breeze would allow them, headed by their two flag-ships, the *Victory*, that carried Nelson, and the *Royal Sovereign*, which bore Collingwood's flag. Both of them advanced with all sail hoisted at a great distance from the three-deckers, which followed next to them, as if to offer themselves alone to the attacks of our whole fleet. This magnificent audacity, admired even by those who were about to be its victims, has often been blamed as contrary to all the rules of naval tactics. It is certain that if the forces had been equal, its only result would have been to expose the vessel thus isolated to the fire of the enemy's fleet, before the arrival of the rest of the column; but it was justified by our weakness, which Nelson was aware of as well as Villeneuve. It was therefore a proof of his genius. He acted with the certainty of his superiority, trusting in his strength like a giant who has to fight with pigmies. With the advantages that he had over us, the ordinary precautions of tactics would have been a loss of time and a useless constraint. Neither the rules nor the uses of war are thought of by an enemy who has only to extend his arm to conquer. Villeneuve's manœuvre had

[1] *Rapport* of Admiral Villeneuve, November 5.

forced Nelson to renounce his intention of cutting off the retreat of the whole of the combined fleet; he wished however at least to cut it off from our centre and Gravina's squadron, which had become the rear. To this end, he decided to pierce our line in the centre, where our flag-ship, the *Bucentaure*, stood, leaving his friend Collingwood to surround and capture Gravina's vessels. As for our van, commanded by Dumanoir, he neglected it, convinced that it would not arrive in time for the fight. When all his plans were made, Nelson descended into his cabin, where he knelt down and wrote a short prayer in his journal, asking God for victory, and supplicating him 'not to permit any Englishman to forget the sacred rights of humanity.' He then added a codicil to his will, recommending to England the woman whom his love immortalised, as well as his daughter Horatia Nelson. This done, he went on deck and addressed the squadron in those famous words, the heroic simplicity of which electrified his sailors, 'England expects every man to do his duty.'

It was now about twelve at noon. The *Royal Sovereign*, with Collingwood, arrived with all sail hoisted upon our line, towards the point at which the rear joined the centre, about twenty minutes in advance of the column of which he formed the head. He sustained the cross fire of Gravina's ships, without replying and without slackening his speed, till he pierced our line between the *Fougueux* and the *Santa Anna*, when he poured the fire from his three tiers of guns upon the stern of the latter vessel. This frightful discharge placed at one blow four hundred men *hors de combat*. The *Fougueux*, which had received at the same time several broadsides from the starboard guns, without suffering as much, immediately attacked him with four other vessels, in order to make him part with his prey; but the *Royal Sovereign* sustained this unequal struggle without injury, and very soon the *Belleisle* and the other three-deckers of Collingwood's column came to his relief, penetrating in their turn the breach that had been opened.

Meanwhile Nelson had rushed upon our centre at the

head of the left column. Like the *Royal Sovereign*, the *Victory* had been exposed to the fire of the whole of our squadron without having experienced any great damage. Resolved, both to fight hand to hand the *Bucentaure* which carried Villeneuve, and to make a second gap in our line, Nelson had first steered his vessel to the head of the *Bucentaure*, where Villeneuve had made preparations for boarding, but finding the line impenetrable at this point, owing to the presence of the *Santissima Trinidad*, he suddenly changed the direction, and passed astern of the *Bucentaure*, pouring into her several successive discharges, which shattered her stern, dismounted her guns, and covered her deck with wounded and dead. He then advanced towards the *Redoutable*, leaving the vessels that came behind him to finish the defeat of the *Bucentaure*. The *Redoutable* was commanded by Captain Lucas, one of the most intrepid officers in the French fleet; but she was very inferior in artillery to the *Victory*. But this ship had already lost more than fifty of her crew, and as the two vessels were grappling together the artillery could only play a very secondary part in this fight. The tops of the *Redoutable* were armed with sharpshooters, while the *Victory*, which was unprovided with them, replied feebly to this destructive fire: her sailors fell fast without being able to answer the invisible enemy, and her deck was inundated with blood and strewed with corpses. Calm amid this scene of slaughter, Nelson, in full dress of an admiral, and wearing all his orders, was walking the quarter-deck with Captain Hardy, encouraging by his presence the defenders of the *Victory*. All at once he staggered and fell. A ball from the tops of the *Redoutable*, after having pierced his shoulder and chest, had broken his spine. The captain in despair tried to raise him. 'It is all over with me, Hardy,' said Nelson. 'They have done for me at last!'

Captain Lucas did not know what an immense loss he had just caused to England, but he saw the deck of the *Victory* almost undefended, and thought the moment favourable for boarding her. But the bulwarks of the *Victory*, a three-decker, which overtopped the *Redoutable*,

rendered the boarding difficult, and the English marines, who had rushed on deck, repulsed this first attack. Lucas was preparing to make a second, by means of one of his yards, which he threw as a bridge between the two ships. But at the moment that his column of attack had mounted upon it, the *Temeraire*, which had hastened to the relief of the British admiral, came abreast the *Redoutable*, and with a single broadside killed two hundred men. She immediately repeated the manœuvre, again crushed the *Redoutable*, dismasted her, riddled her with shot, and in an instant so completely changed the fortune of the battle that the heroic captain was reduced to surrender, after having lost five hundred and twenty-two men killed and wounded.

About the same time, the *Santa Anna*, having lost all her masts and a great part of her crew, surrendered to the *Royal Sovereign*. It was scarcely an hour and a half since the action had begun, and our line was broken in the centre and rear by two large gaps, through which the whole of the two English columns had passed to attack us on the lee-side, each vessel choosing her adversary after the order of sailing, and not ceasing to struggle till she had captured or disabled her prize.

Our van, under the orders of Dumanoir, had remained intact. In conformity with the spirit of Villeneuve's instructions, which prescribed to all our vessels to rush to the fire as to their true post, this officer ought to have borne down upon Nelson's column as it advanced towards our centre. He only executed his movement, however, very late, upon the express order of Villeneuve, and with extreme slackness, either because he was hindered by the calm, as he afterwards alleged in his *Mémoire justificatif*, or because he saw even then that this manœuvre would be his destruction, without saving the rest of the fleet. Compromised in reality from the outset by the success of Nelson's gap, our fleet saw the duel of the *Victory* with the *Redoutable*, and of the *Royal Sovereign* with the *Santa Anna* renewed on several points at once, with the same unfortunate issue. Everywhere our sailors had fought with admirable intrepidity, but their experience was not equal to their courage, and they had been

crushed by the superiority of their adversaries in seamanship and the service of the artillery. The *Fougueux*, commanded by one of the bravest officers of the navy, Captain Baudoin, succumbed in a few minutes, overwhelmed and disabled by the formidable batteries of the *Temeraire*. Almost at the same time Magon was killed on the *Algésiras*, which was on fire, and whose masts fell with great noise, while the English rushed on board in the middle of the flames. In the rear, where the Spanish vessels were in greater numbers, Gravina received a death-wound on his flag-ship. The *San-Juan-Nepomuceno*, the *Monarca*, the *Argonauta*, succumbed successively under the attacks of Collingwood's division; and, after them, eight vessels surrendered to the enemy; the rest slowly withdrew to Cadiz. In the centre the *Bucentaure* still remained with the *Santissima Trinidad*. The unfortunate Villeneuve, who saw with grief the realisation of the disaster that he had so often predicted, hoped not to survive it; but he had to witness it to the end, death would not take him. Placed at the point by which Nelson's column penetrated, he was exposed successively to the fire of eleven English vessels,[1] which killed or wounded nearly three hundred of his men; all his masts fell one after the other, and in falling they obstructed the starboard battery, the only one by which he could damage the enemy. All resistance then becoming useless, he purposed to lower a boat and go in it to another ship to continue the fight, but his boats had been dashed to pieces by the fall of the masts. He hailed the *Santissima Trinidad* to ask her for one, but his cries were lost in the horrible tumult of this scene of destruction. He surrendered to the English, to save the rest of his crew.

The action was scarcely over when a tremendous report was heard, which made the most resolute tremble; it was the *Achille*, which, half-devoured by the flames, had just blown up, after having refused to the end to strike her flag. It was about half-past five o'clock. Of the thirty-three vessels of the French fleet eighteen were in the hands of the English, eleven were retreating with difficulty

[1] *Rapport* of Major-General Contamine.

to Cadiz, four others were steering off, under the command of Dumanoir, who only rescued them from this field of carnage to let them, on the following 5th of November, fall in with an English cruiser, to which they were forced to surrender after a courageous resistance. The French had lost more than seven thousand men, the English scarcely a third of this number; but this triumph, however glorious it may have been for them, was nevertheless dearly bought, for they paid for it with the life of their greatest warrior, and the desolation of the conquerors equalled the despair of the vanquished.[1]

The dying hero was still able to smile over his last victory. He seemed to retain with effort the life that was ebbing away, in order to witness our defeat. In the agony of death he suddenly roused up at the sound of the hurrahs that hailed the fall of the *Bucentaure*. He sent for Captain Hardy, and, half-rising from his couch, said, 'Well! is the day ours?' and upon his friend's assurance that it was, a deep sigh escaped from his oppressed breast. He then advised him to bring the fleet to anchor before night, for from the morning he had foreseen a tempest; then drawing him towards him: 'Hardy,' he said, with a feeble voice, 'I am a dead man, . . . in a few minutes it will be all over; . . . listen, Hardy, when I am no more, cut off my hair and take it to my dear Lady Hamilton, . . . and do not throw my poor body into the sea!'[2] When the battle was finished Hardy returned to the dying man, and informed him of all the grandeur of the triumph. A last ray lighted up Nelson's countenance. 'Thank God!' he murmured, 'I have done my duty,' and a few moments after he expired amid the sobs of those around him.

In the evening several of the vessels that had been captured by the English went down in a fearful storm which agitated the sea, and three out of those of ours which were gaining Cadiz were broken to pieces on the rocks

[1] Collingwood's report (dated October 22, to the Lords of the Admiralty) renders full justice to Villeneuve, and to the 'highly honourable' courage of our officers (*Annual Register*, 1805).

[2] Robert Southey: *Life of Nelson.*

close to the port. Only eight ships escaped the disaster, and they remained blockaded in Cadiz till they fell into the power of the Spanish insurgents.

Thus finished the fatal battle of Trafalgar, in which so many noble lives were sacrificed to the blind and perverse infatuation of a single man. All these torrents of blood had been shed, not only without necessity, but without even a pretext. This immense hecatomb was made out of bravado, it had no other cause than the caprice and wounded pride which Napoleon had experienced for having for an instant submitted to the prudent determination of Villeneuve. He sought to bury in profound oblivion even the remembrance of the horrible catastrophe that he had just drawn upon France. Instead of recognising his mistake, and seeking to repair the ill that he had done, he conceived a hatred of the witnesses of the lie thus given to the infallibility of his genius, and not being able to dream of getting rid of the small number of victims who had survived the disaster, he endeavoured, as far as he could, to wipe out all trace of their glorious misfortune. He shamefully concealed their defeat, which was his own; he organised against them a conspiracy of ingratitude and oblivion; he confounded in the same disgrace the heroes and the cowards, and he had not a single recompense for so many brilliant actions, not a single consolation for so unmerited a misfortune, he who incessantly spoke of honour and military virtue!

Some time after, in the beginning of April 1806, Villeneuve, released on parole by the English, who had treated him with all the consideration that his courage and misfortune merited, disembarked privately at Morlaix. The report that he had addressed the previous 5th of November, on board the English frigate *Euryalus*, to the minister of the marine, on the battle of Trafalgar, concluded with these touching words: 'As for me, overwhelmed with the extent of my misfortune and the responsibility of so great a disaster, I desire nothing so much as to be soon able to go and lay at the feet of his Majesty, either the *justification* of my conduct or the *victim* that ought to be sacrificed, not

to the honour of the flag, which I venture to affirm has remained intact, but to the shades of those who may have perished through my imprudence, my incautiousness, or forgetfulness of some one of my duties.' It was this justification that Villeneuve brought, and never had man, crushed by an implacable fatality, more right to it than he; but it was only the victim that was wanted; for if Villeneuve was innocent, who was guilty then? He went as far as Rennes, and there he waited in the chamber of an inn for an answer from Decrès to a letter that he had written, to inform him of his speedy arrival in Paris, and his intention to appeal to the justice of the Emperor. What this reply was it is easy to guess. Decrès esteemed his former friend, but he was a courtier, and did not care to compromise himself by defending him. On the 22d of April Villeneuve was found stretched dead in his room, and stabbed in six places with a knife, in the region of the heart; the blade plunged into it by a sure hand was still in the wound. This was his only reply to the ignoble insult of him who had written that Villeneuve '*would sacrifice everything provided he saved his skin!*' Up to the last moment he only accused his destiny. Upon the table lay a letter that he had addressed to his wife: 'My tender friend, how will you bear this blow? Alas! I weep more for thee than for myself. . . . Alone here, anathematised by the Emperor, repulsed by his minister, who was my friend; charged with an immense responsibility in a disaster which is ascribed to me, and into which fatality drew me, I must die! . . . Live tranquilly, seek consolation in the sweet religious sentiments which animate thee; my hope is that thou wilt find a repose that is refused to me. Adieu, dry the tears of all those to whom I am dear. I wished to finish, I cannot. *What a blessing that I have no children to reap my horrible heritage and bear the weight of my name!* Ah! I was not born for such a fate, I did not seek it, I was drawn into it in spite of myself. Farewell, farewell! . . .'

The sinister impressions to which Pichegru's death and the sanguinary tragedy of Vincennes had given rise were as yet so slightly effaced that no one would believe in

Villeneuve's suicide. It was related that upon the order of Decrès, and at the instigation of Napoleon, Magendie, captain of the *Bucentaure*, who had returned from England at the same time as Villeneuve, had consented to undertake the murder; and these rumours were so persistent that after the fall of the Empire Magendie wrote, under the title of *Notice nécrologique sur Villeneuve*, a true justificatory memoir, in order to refute this calumnious imputation. To the conclusive proofs which he brought forward for himself and Decrès he added the most honourable and touching testimony to the memory of *the dear and good admiral.*[1]

Already a short time before the death of Captain Wright had given rise to similar reports. These reports were probably false, but from the mere fact that the imperial *régime* offered no legal means of ascertaining the truth, that it rendered all publicity and all control impossible, suspicions became legitimate, and the historian has no right to pass them over in silence, for they depict, better than any other circumstance, the state of distrust and intimidation in which the nation stood towards its Government. Wright was the captain of the English navy who had disembarked Georges and his companions at Biville Cliff. Fallen into our hands in consequence of a shipwreck, Napoleon had imprisoned him in the Temple, and treated him as an accomplice of the conspiracy, although the captain had only obeyed the orders of his Government, as any other officer would have done in his place. Interrogated at Moreau's trial, he had invoked his orders as a naval officer, and asked to be treated as a prisoner of war, declining to give any explanation with regard to the instructions he had received. Wright was a most distinguished seaman; he had been the companion of Sidney Smith at Saint Jean d'Acre; he had remained his intimate friend; he had been insulted on several occasions by the *Moniteur*, as the last of assassins, and in his conversations, as in his correspondence, Bonaparte had never spoken of him but with expressions of the most violent hatred. This was all the public knew of Wright, when on the 26th of October 1805 he was found dead in his prison.

[1] Letter from Captain Infernet to Magendie.

His throat was cut, by his side was a razor, and a number of the *Moniteur*, containing the account of the capitulation of Ulm,—news that was given as the cause of his suicide. It was remarked that this number of the *Moniteur* recalled too vividly the Seneca that had figured in the spectacle of Pichegru's death. Sidney Smith, in the searching enquiry he afterwards made into the tragic end of his friend,[1] collected and brought to light a number of the most suspicious circumstances. During the whole evening which had preceded his pretended suicide, Wright had shown no depression, had played the flute till a late hour; the cut of the razor had been given with so much force that the head was almost separated from the body; and a still stranger thing, the razor had been shut after the cut; the captain's right arm, instead of being uncovered, as his action would have supposed, hung beside his body; the blood, with which the floor was covered, had been trampled on; cries and the noise as of a struggle were heard during the night; lastly, Wright had many times announced to his companions, and among others to Captain Wallis, who was imprisoned with him, that Pichegru's fate was prepared for him, but that in no case were they to believe in his suicide. All these facts were proved by circumstantiated depositions, which may, however, be called in question as made for the most part ten years after the event.

In spite of these appearances, we may say that the murder of Captain Wright is not probable; and if we arrive at this conclusion, it is not because on the day of Wright's death, October 26, 1805, Napoleon wrote to Fouché: '*Order that wretched assassin Wright, who tried to escape from the Temple, to be confined in a dungeon,*'[2] for this might have been written, like so many other expressions, with the mere view of deceiving posterity. Our opinion is founded upon the far surer presumption that he had no interest in committing so atrocious an action. It is, moreover, by no means impossible that Fouché took upon himself to do it out of an excess of zeal; and Napoleon himself

[1] *Naval Chronicle*, 1816, vol. 36.
[2] *Correspondance.*

suggested this hypothesis at St. Helena,[1] solving it, it is true, in the negative: 'Fouché,' he says, 'would not have dared, because he knew that I should have had him hung for his audacity; . . . *for Wright to have been secretly murdered it would have been necessary to have had my orders and not those of Fouché.* . . . Besides,' he added, 'my mind was just then occupied with such important objects that I had no time to think of the poor English captain.' The extract above quoted shows that there is no ground for this last argument. Is it more admissible that Fouché would have run the risk of being hung, by somewhat forestalling the justice of his master with regard to this miserable assassin Wright? Napoleon himself relates that he had resolved 'to have the captain tried and executed for having disembarked assassins and spies upon the coast of France;'[2] and would he have had Fouché hung for having so well guessed and anticipated his intentions? It is at any rate doubtful. When, on the day after the plot of the infernal machine, Fouché delivered up to him one hundred and fifty Jacobins, who were sent beyond the seas to a slow but certain death, for a crime that they had not committed, did he have Fouché hung? Before he thought of it he would have had to begin by another criminal. Be this as it may, the impression produced in Paris by this fresh suicide may be summed up in the witty remark current at that time: 'Bonaparte is really unfortunate, all his enemies die in his hands!'

It is time to relate the issue of the astonishing campaign, of which the first act had been marked by the thunderstroke of Ulm, and the second by the occupation of Vienna. Napoleon had quitted this capital towards the middle of November. He had advanced into Moravia as far as Brünn, a strong place of great importance, but undefended by troops, and which he was able to occupy without striking a blow, thanks to the carelessness and want of foresight of the Austrians. The army of the allies was massed fifteen leagues from there, near Olmütz, where Kutuzoff had at last succeeded in effecting his junction with the army of Alexander. It formed, according to the official statements,

[1] O'Meara. [2] O'Meara, September 17, 1817.

a total number of 82,000 men, of whom 14,000 only were Austrians.[1] It was composed of good troops, in no way demoralised, for Kutuzoff, though forced to retreat before forces of an overwhelming superiority, had resisted us at Amstetten, at Dürrenstein, and at Hollabrunn, with a firmness that did him the greatest honour.

This army had so much interest in gaining time before they attacked Napoleon, that their operations are still an enigma. Important reinforcements, under the command of General Béningsen, were marching to rejoin them; the month, at the term of which Prussia was to bring her armies into the field, was on the eve of expiring, and this was a hundred and twenty thousand men more for the coalition; the Anglo-Swedish army was about to march from Hanover into Holland, which was undefended; the Archduke Charles had arrived in Hungary, where he was repairing his losses and preparing to take up the offensive; lastly, Napoleon, in presence of the imminent danger to which these eventualities exposed him, had suspended his forward march; feeling that his position, at so great a distance from his basis of operations, was already very dangerous. In all probability, a simple temporisation on the part of the Austro-Russians would in a very short time have constrained him to retire, under the double necessity of concentrating his troops and preserving his line of retreat. The struggle being renewed under these new conditions, his destruction was almost infallible, for he was about to find himself enclosed between three considerable armies, with reduced forces; and if two of these armies had joined hands in Hungary, as Kutuzoff proposed, they would have presented a mass difficult for him to cut through.

These were urgent reasons for avoiding all meeting with Napoleon before the expected events had taken place. It is not easy, even now, to explain the motives that induced the allies to act when they had everything to gain by waiting.

[1] Danilewski. This is also the number given by Berthier in a letter to Masséna of the 3d of December: *Mémorial du dépôt de la guerre.* As for Napoleon's bulletins, they are wholly incorrect upon this point.

It has been stated, it is true, that the Austro-Russian army wanted provisions at Olmütz, but it was easy to procure them elsewhere, and nothing obliged them to keep this position. They had even an interest in falling back upon Hungary, to join the 80,000 men of the Archduke Charles. But Alexander, who had committed a first fault in coming, in spite of the remonstrances of his wisest friends,[1] in the midst of his army, where his presence would naturally paralyse brave but servile generals, had fallen under the influence of the Staff-General Weyrother, a vain man of no capacity, who was fond of making plans, and who had been the Archduke John's counsellor at Hohenlinden. Alexander was moreover surrounded by young men, full of ardour, courage, and illusions, impatient to distinguish themselves in the eyes of their sovereign, and who spoke with the most profound contempt of the dilatory system proposed by Kutuzoff, by the emperor of Austria, and by the most experienced chiefs of the army. Grave discords that had arisen between the Austrians and the Russians, in consequence of the unfortunate opening of the campaign, also contributed to make both desire a prompt renewal of hostilities, in which each hoped to find his justification.

Napoleon was aware of this state of things, and turned it to account with marvellous skill. He had just received, with a great deal of haughtiness, MM. de Stadion and Giulay, whom the emperor of Austria had sent to his camp to make overtures to him. He almost immediately afterwards regretted this, on learning that Prussia was on the point of joining his adversaries, and he became as communicative as he had hitherto been haughty and suspicious. On the 25th of November he despatched Savary to the camp of the allies, with a complimentary letter to the Emperor Alexander, and with a secret mission to observe attentively the army of the enemy, while he felt the ground for a negotiation. Savary was received with courtesy, but very coldly. He only brought back to his master a curt and evasive letter, which was addressed not

[1] The Prince Czartoryski to Alexander, April, 1806. *Correspondance* published by M. Ch. de Mazade.

to the Emperor, but to the *Chef du Gouvernement Français.*[1] Napoleon, who was so sensitive upon this point, took no offence, he wanted to show that he was superior to the trifles of a vain etiquette, and only became more complaisant. Savary immediately returned to Olmütz, to propose an interview between Napoleon and the too confiding Alexander. At the same time he was to complete his studies on the Austro-Russian army. Savary, who had the eyes and ears of a future minister of police, observed the size and disposition of the army; he got into conversation with the aides-de-camp, and took note of the rash confidence of the young officers. Alexander refused the interview, but he consented to send to Napoleon his aide-de-camp, the Prince Dolgorouki. Napoleon took care not to give the prince the same opportunity for making observations that Savary had had with Alexander. He received him at his advanced posts, and only let him see just enough of his army to deceive him. A few days before, a squadron of our advance-guard had been separated and taken prisoner at Wischau. Dolgorouki found our troops falling back upon all points in order to concentrate themselves in the positions studied long beforehand, towards which Napoleon wished to draw the Austro-Russian army. Crowded in a narrow space, still separated from Bernadotte's corps and Friant's division, which were only to arrive at the last moment, ostensibly occupied in raising intrenchments upon different points as if they feared to be attacked, they could only strike this prince by the apparent weakness of their force and by their timid and constrained attitude.[2]

After the usual compliments, Dolgorouki went to the object of his mission without any more oratorical precautions. Napoleon has reported the interview with his habitual untruthfulness, seasoning his account with usual insults towards all men in whom he met with any firmness. He has related in his bulletins that this *puppy* (*freluquet*) went so far as to propose to him the cession of Belgium. It had never been contemplated to demand Belgium from

[1] *Mémoires* du Duc de Rovigo.
[2] Thirtieth bulletin.

France, and the time would have been badly chosen to put forward such a proposition. Dolgorouki made no proposal of this kind. Alexander had agreed upon a programme, when he allied himself to Austria and Prussia, and it was this programme, already discussed a hundred times, that his aide-de-camp submitted to Napoleon. Dolgorouki's report of this interview bears a stamp of truth, and strikingly reminds us of the famous account of Whitworth's interview with Napoleon. As usual, Napoleon speaks as a tempter when he cannot speak as a master. 'What do they want of me? Why does the Emperor Alexander make war on me? What does he require? Is he jealous of the aggrandisement of France? Well! let him extend his frontiers at the expense of his neighbours . . . by way of Turkey; and all quarrels will be terminated!' And as Dolgorouki replied that Russia did not care to increase her territory, but wanted to maintain the independence of Europe, to secure the evacuation of Holland and Switzerland, the indemnity that she had never ceased to claim for the king of Sardinia, Napoleon flew into a violent passion, and exclaimed that he would cede nothing in Italy, 'not even if the Russians were encamped upon the heights of Montmartre!'[1] an exclamation that is so much the more probable that we find it textually a few days later in one of his bulletins. These words put an end to a negotiation that had been, on the part of Napoleon, only a ruse of war intended to embolden his enemies, and both sides now thought of nothing but battle.

The positions that Napoleon had occupied to await the collision with the allies were admirably chosen, both for attack and for defence. Backed by the citadel of Brünn, which would, if it were necessary, insure their retreat into Bohemia; covered, on their left, by hills thickly wooded; on their front by a deep stream, which at certain distances formed large ponds, our troops were intrenched in the right angle made by the two high roads which run from Brünn, one to Vienna and the other to Olmütz. They occupied all the villages situated along the stream, from Girszkowitz

[1] Prince Dolgorouki's report.

to Telnitz, where the ponds begin. Opposite to our centre, on the other side of the stream, rose the plateau of Pratzen, a commanding and advanced position, beyond which appeared at some distance the village and château of Austerlitz, which the army of the two emperors already occupied. Napoleon had posted at his left, round a knoll to which our soldiers had given the name of the *Santon*, Lannes' *corps d'armée*, on both sides of the Olmütz road; at his right, from Telnitz to Kobelnitz, he had placed Soult's corps; at his centre, towards Girszkowitz, that of Bernadotte, which had arrived the day before from the Bohemian frontier, and with him Murat's cavalry. He himself formed the reserve with his guard and ten battalions, commanded by Oudinot. Behind his extreme right, at Raygern, in a position far removed from his centre, he detached Davout, with Friant's division and a division of cavalry, in order to bring them down at the decisive moment upon the left of the Russians. The whole of these troops amounted, notwithstanding all that has been said, to a total at least equal to that of the allies, for the three *corps d'armée* of Soult, Bernadotte, and Lannes, however reduced we may suppose them to have been by their losses and detachments, could not have numbered less than from fifteen to twenty thousand men each; the guard and Murat's cavalry formed at least twenty thousand men, and Davout's detachment counted eight thousand.[1]

This position, almost unassailable in front, was calculated to suggest to the allies the idea of cutting off Napoleon from the route to Vienna, by turning his right, and thus separating him from the rest of his army, which had remained quartered in the nighbourhood of the capital. But this operation, hazardous enough if it were undertaken even at a distance by a series of strategical movements with forces only equal to his own, became an act of the most foolish temerity the moment it was attempted under the eyes of so formidable an enemy, within reach of his

[1] M. Thiers says 65,000 to 70,000 men. Napoleon, who contradicts himself upon this point, says, however, in speaking of the illumination that the soldiers extemporised for him, 80,000 men.

cannon, and upon the field of battle that he had chosen. Such was, however, the plan which Weyrother ventured to adopt, encouraged no doubt by the apparent and calculated weakness of the detachments of our right near Telnitz, and the approaches of the road to Vienna. In order to entice him more and more into this perilous path, Napoleon had not only withdrawn the troops from his right, but had not even occupied the plateau of Pratzen, a kind of elevated promontory which advanced towards the centre of the two armies, and from the top of which he would have been able to render the turning movement of the Austro-Russian army very difficult. The allies established themselves upon this plateau, but with insufficient forces, without suspecting the importance of the position and the part that it was to play in the coming battle. On the evening of the 1st of December, the Russians commenced their flank march, keeping along our line at two gunshots' distance for about four leagues, in order to turn our right. Napoleon, from his bivouac, saw them rushing to their ruin, with a transport of joy. He allowed them to effect their movement without putting any obstacle in their way, as if he recognised the impossibility of opposing it. Only one small corps of our cavalry showed itself on the plain, and immediately retired as if intimidated by the forces of the enemy.[1]

Napoleon quickly understood, by this commencement, that his efforts to draw the attack upon his right were going to be crowned with success. His conviction in this respect was so firm, that the same evening in the proclamation that he addressed to his soldiers he did not hesitate to announce to them the manœuvre that the enemy would make on the morrow at his proper risk and peril. 'The positions which we occupy,' he said, 'are formidable; and, while they are marching to turn my right, they will present their flank to me. Soldiers, I shall myself direct your battalions. I shall keep out of the fire, if, with your usual bravery, you throw disorder and confusion into the enemy's ranks; but if the victory should be for a moment uncertain, you will see your Emperor the foremost to expose himself to danger!'

[1] Thirtieth bulletin.

This prediction, made with so much assurance, greatly contributed to gain credit for a report that is still very generally believed in Russia,[1] that Weyrother's plan had been treacherously made known to Napoleon. There is nothing impossible in this fact; for although Weyrother's plan was only communicated to the allied generals very late in the night of December 1, it was certainly known earlier to a part of the staff. But Napoleon had no need of such a communication to discover a fault, of which he had himself suggested the idea by his own dispositions, and of which he had seen all the preliminary developments with his own eyes. This story is then but of slight importance, and could only be admitted upon formal proofs, which have not hitherto been given.

After having inspected the advanced posts, Napoleon resolved to visit the bivouacs. Being recognised by the soldiers, he was immediately surrounded and cheered. They wished to *fête* the anniversary of his coronation; bundles of straw were hoisted blazing on poles for an impromptu illumination, and an immense train of light, running along our line, made the allies believe that Napoleon was trying to steal away, by means of a stratagem borrowed from a Hannibal or a Frederick. An old grenadier approached, and addressed him in the name of his fellow-soldiers: 'I promise thee,' he said, 'that to-morrow we will bring thee the colours and cannon of the Russian army, to *fête* the anniversary of thy coronation!' A characteristic harangue, which showed that, in spite of everything, the republican spirit still subsisted in the lower ranks of the army, and that the soldiers regarded Napoleon less as a master than as a former equal, in whom, even in crowning him, they thought they were personifying their own grandeur.

The next morning, December 2, 1805, the rising sun

[1] See the 'Relation' of General Danilewski, who is very positive on this point, and whom M. Thiers contradicts, without in any way refuting him. This report was very general at the time of the battle. 'No one,' wrote De Maistre, January 31, 1806,—'no one here doubts but that the plan of the battle was communicated to Bonaparte.' *Correspondance Diplomatique*, published by Albert Blanc.

gradually dispelled the fog that covered the country, and showed the two armies ready for the conflict. The Russians had almost entirely evacuated the plateau of Pratzen, and in the valley beneath their columns were distinctly seen advancing in the direction of Telnitz and Sokolnitz. It was there that they hoped to turn our right, after having forced the Legrand division, which alone held this defile. The execution of this principal manœuvre of Weyrother's plan had been confided to clumsy Buxhœwden, a brave general, but of no ability, who had under his orders a corps of thirty thousand men, and Generals Langeron, Doctoroff, and Przibyszewski. They were to be supported by Kollowrath, who still occupied a part of the plateau. The Russian right, commanded by Bagration, faced Lannes in front of the *Santon;* in the centre, near Austerlitz, were the two emperors with their guard and the *corps d'armée* of Prince Lichtenstein. Kutuzoff, discouraged and disheartened by the kind of fetichism that the sacred person of the czar inspired in the Russians, followed his master, lamenting beforehand the misfortunes which he foresaw, but without doing anything to ward them off. Bagration himself, on reading in the morning Weyrother's plan, had exclaimed, 'The battle is lost!'[1]

The allied army thus formed an immense semicircle, which extended from Holubitz to Telnitz, and closed the angle of which our soldiers occupied the centre. Lying in wait at the bottom of this sort of funnel, concentrated in a narrow space, attentive, motionless, and crouching like a lion preparing to spring upon its prey, the French army was waiting in formidable silence the signal for rushing on the enemy. When the whole of the left of the allies had reached the ponds, and were beginning to attack at Telnitz Legrand's division, which was soon to be supported by Davout's corps, recalled from Raygern, Napoleon, who had hitherto kept back his troops, gave the signal, and Soult's divisions rushed to the assault of the heights of Pratzen. There they found Kollowrath's column, marching to rejoin Buxhœwden. In an instant they attacked it in flank and

[1] Danilewski.

overturned it; immediately after they found the infantry of Miloradowitch, which was drawn up in a second line to support it. Vandamme's and St. Hilaire's divisions, seconded by Thiébault's and Morand's brigades, threw themselves with the bayonet upon the Russian battalions. These, stopped short in the middle of their movement, finding no reserve to support them, attacked in the rear when they were marching to assail the enemy in front, were driven down the slopes of the plateau under the eyes of the Emperor Alexander, surprised and dismayed at the unforeseen catastrophe which had just routed his centre.

While Napoleon was striking with his accustomed rapidity this decisive blow, which at the beginning of the battle cut the Russian army in two at its very centre, his other *corps d'armée*, boldly deploying by a simultaneous forward march, were performing with almost equal success the task that had been assigned to them. At our extreme right, it is true, Legrand's division, overwhelmed by quadruple forces, had at first been driven beyond Telnitz and Sokolnitz, but Davout had soon come to their assistance with Friant's and Bourcier's divisions, so that Legrand's retrograde movement had proved an advantage rather than otherwise, since it had drawn the Russian left deeper and deeper into the snare in which it was taken. At our centre, Bernadotte had marched upon Blaziowitz; he had attacked the Russian guard and Prince Lichtenstein's corps, while Lannes, who formed our right, took Holubitz, in spite of Bagration's efforts to dispute him this position. This double irruption prevented the Russians from reinforcing their troops at Pratzen. Lichtenstein's magnificent cavalry, composed of eighty-two squadrons, called on one side to succour the centre and charged on the other to support Bagration, could not act with the harmony that was necessary to the impulse of such an irresistible mass. One part of his squadrons engaged with Constantine's uhlans in the pursuit of Kellermann's light horse, in the middle of our infantry, which crushed it with their fire; the other charged more successfully Murat's cavalry, but being unsupported it soon fell back.

At Pratzen Kamenski's brigade, brought from the Russian left to the relief of the centre by Prince Wolkonski, had rallied the remnants of Kollowrath's and Miloradowitch's divisions, and for a moment renewed the combat. Alexander at length understood the importance of the possession of the plateau, but it was impossible for his *corps d'armée*, engaged so far from this position, which was the first of the whole battle, to send reinforcements in time. Old Kutuzoff, wounded in the head, saw with despair the realisation of his fears, and on being asked if his wound was dangerous exclaimed, extending his hand towards Pratzen, 'There, there is the mortal wound!' Assailed in front and in flank by all Soult's divisions, Kamenski's brigade heroically resisted our attacks. But soon overwhelmed by numbers, and reduced to half, it was forced down into the bottoms by the side of Birnbaum. It was one o'clock; the centre of the allies was annihilated: their two wings fought still, but without communication and without means of rejoining. In this critical moment the Russian guard, of which the greater part had hitherto remained in reserve, advanced towards our centre to drive it back, and attempted to retake the heights of Pratzen. One of our battalions was surprised and overturned by its cuirassiers, but Napoleon's guard rushed up in its turn. The two cavalries charged with fury in a desperate conflict. A hand-to-hand fight began between these choice troops, but it terminated in our favour. The horse-guards, cut to pieces by our horsemen, fell back in disorder, and Rapp took Prince Repnine prisoner. At the same time a general movement of the guard and Bernadotte's corps broke the Russian line, which was driven back in the direction of Austerlitz after a frightful slaughter. Napoleon hastened to join a part of these troops to those of Soult, in order to make a general attack upon Buxhœwden's *corps d'armée*.

This general, blindly pursuing his movement round our right, had not only passed by Telnitz and the defiles that formed the ponds, but he had advanced as far as Turas, situated in our rear, always fighting more or less successfully against Davout's and Legrand's divisions, and without

paying any attention to what was taking place in the centre. Recalled by the most peremptory orders, he was now obliged to regain this dangerous route under the fire of all Soult's divisions. Przibyszewski's division, which he had left at Sokolnitz, was surrounded and forced to surrender. He succeeded in bringing back Doctoroff's column as far as Augezd; but at the moment that he was debouching from it Vandamme fell upon him from the heights of Pratzen and cut his column in two, a portion of which only was able to continue the route to rejoin Kutuzoff. The rest of Doctoroff's column and the whole of Langeron's, with Kienmayer's cavalry, were driven over the ponds. Their artillery passed on to a bridge which broke under it. The troops rushed on to the pond of Telnitz, which had been frozen for two or three days; but Napoleon immediately directed the fire of his batteries upon these unfortunate soldiers. The ice was broken by our balls and by the weight of so great a mass: it suddenly gave way, and several thousands of men were engulfed in the water. On the morrow their cries and groans were still heard. There remained no other issue for Doctoroff and Kienmayer than a narrow road between the two ponds of Melnitz and Telnitz, and it was by this route, under the cross fire of our artillery, that these generals executed their retreat with admirable firmness, but sustaining immense losses.[1]

Such were the mournful scenes upon which *the sun of Austerlitz* shone. These scenes had doubtless their grandeur, as have all those in which courage and genius have been displayed, but nothing could henceforth efface the horror of them, for one thing alone has the privilege of purifying and ennobling a field of battle, and that is the triumph of a great idea. Here it was not a principle that was involved, but a man. Our victories could no longer be other than massacres.

The Austro-Russian army had retreated, not to Olmütz,

[1] Thirtieth, thirty-first, thirty-second, and thirty-third bulletins; Napoleon's notes upon Kutuzoff's report; 'Relation' of General Danilewski; 'Relation' of General Rauch; *Mémorial du dépôt de la guerre;* Kutuzoff's report; Jomini; *Mémoires* de Rovigo.

as Napoleon supposed on the evening of the battle of Austerlitz, but into Hungary, which in all probability saved it from a still greater disaster. The Russians had lost twenty-one thousand men, dead or wounded; the Austrians nearly six thousand; a hundred and thirty-three guns and an immense number of flags had remained in our hands. We had lost on our side, according to the most probable estimates, about eight thousand five hundred men; for the calculation contained in the emperor's bulletin, of eight hundred killed and fifteen hundred wounded, can only be regarded as a most puerile falsehood.

Never had Napoleon before carried off such an overwhelming victory. We may add, that never either had he been so much aided by the faults of his adversaries; but to lead the enemy to commit faults is half the genius of war, and it was in this that he excelled. The victory of Rivoli had been as brilliant by the sureness and precision of the manœuvres, but the results were far from equalling those of Austerlitz. Its immediate consequences were equivalent to the almost complete destruction of the European coalition, which was for a long time reduced to powerlessness. With regard to its future results, they might have been still more satisfactory, if a detestable policy had not incessantly called in question the successes obtained by prodigious military genius. But to the end of his career Napoleon proved by his own example that there is an art still rarer and more difficult than the art of using victory—it is the secret of not abusing it.

CHAPTER IV

THE TREATY OF PRESBURG—THE EMPIRE AND THE VASSAL KINGDOMS—THE CONFEDERATION OF THE RHINE—INTERNAL SITUATION—RUPTURE WITH PRUSSIA

It now remains for me to relate by what a strange series of events Prussia was drawn into taking the place of vanquished Austria on the field of battle.

The day after the battle of Austerlitz the Emperor Francis demanded an interview with his conqueror. A general without an army, and a sovereign without states, this prince had no longer any other refuge than Hungary, which his brother, the archduke, was henceforth unable to defend against us. He came to Napoleon's bivouac. He, the representative of ten centuries of grandeur, of power and of pride, humiliated himself before this upstart, intoxicated with such a triumph, and obtained as a favour an armistice, of which the first condition was that he should separate his cause from that of Alexander, and that the Russians should immediately evacuate his states by regulated marches. Disgusted with his part of generalissimo, and depressed by the scenes of horror which he had witnessed, Alexander eagerly ratified a convention which released him, by the demand of his ally, from all his obligations towards Austria. The Czar was then at Holisch, beyond the Morava. It has been asserted, on the strength of one of Napoleon's bulletins and a boast of Savary, that this prince was in a desperate situation, and that he only owed his safety on this occasion to the magnanimity of Napoleon. But this magnanimity appears very contestable: for, in the first place, when Napoleon granted the armistice he was in

total ignorance of the real position of the Russians; he had even reason to believe it better than it was, since he had pursued them in an opposite direction to that which they had taken; and, secondly, Alexander's retreat was covered by an army which, in spite of its losses, was still much stronger than the two divisions with which Davout prepared to attack it at Göding, and dispute the passage over the Morava. Moreover, Napoleon himself, who wrote in his thirty-first bulletin 'that not a single man of the Russian army would have been able to escape,' was much less positive in his private letters, in which he contented himself with saying that Alexander *would have extricated himself with difficulty*,[1] which has not at all the same meaning.

The object of such assertions is too evident to allow us to admit them without examination. Napoleon's bulletins became more and more kinds of manifestoes addressed, no longer to the French army, but to the whole of Europe, and of which each word was weighed, in order to influence public opinion in favour of the passions and interests of the Emperor. In this case his intention to discredit a brave though unfortunate army while he extolled his own generosity, was clear, and only the complaisant could be deceived. The same may be said of the language which he attributed to the emperor of Austria in the account of his interview with this sovereign. 'France,' he is reported to have said, 'is right in her quarrel with England. . . . The English are shopkeepers, who set the Continent on fire in order to insure for themselves the commerce of the world!' Supposing he had said it, this divulgation of a confidential interview was not only an ungenerous indiscretion, committed with a view to embroil Austria with England, but it was also unskilful, for he missed his aim by so plainly showing the motives which had influenced him. The barbarous acts and horrible devastations which Napoleon calumniously accused the Russian army of committing upon the Austrian territory, the extravagant praises which he lavished upon Prince John of Lichtenstein, the partisan of the Austro-Russian alliance, to the detriment of Cobentzel,

[1] Napoleon to Talleyrand, December 4.

the champion of a national policy, upon M. d'Haugwitz, whose venality was well known, to the detriment of the honest Hardenberg, whom he publicly accused of *not having been inaccessible to the shower of gold*,[1] because he showed that he was jealous of the honour and dignity of his country, —all these various manœuvres had one and the same object, to sow hatred and divisions among the men and nations that he had had to fight. But these sovereigns, these statesmen and diplomatists, were not such novices as not to have heard the proverb, *Divide et impera*. They might feign for an instant to be the dupes of tricks that were employed to set them at variance, but their desire for reconciliation was so much the stronger because he imposed on them the humiliation of a lie that could deceive no one.

Napoleon had no other rule of conduct in the negotiations which opened after the battle of Austerlitz. This time, as he had no longer to gratify his own anger but to solve diplomatic questions of the highest interest, the maxim, divide and govern, was quite seasonable, and he might have followed it with good chance of success if he had been able to bridle his insatiable cupidity. His first care was to part the negotiators, and to treat for peace with each state separately: a skilful plan, which prevented all understanding and all common action between the vanquished powers of the coalition. After having separated Austria from Russia, he hastened to separate her from Prussia. Three days before the battle, M. d'Haugwitz had come to his camp to bring him the ultimatum of Prussia, and Napoleon had sent him to Vienna, putting off his reply till a more convenient moment. Now that Prussia was conquered without having fought, Napoleon intended to treat with D'Haugwitz in person. With regard to the negotiation with Austria, he confided it to Talleyrand, requiring that it should be carried on not at Vienna, but at Brünn.

Talleyrand had remained faithful to the sensible ideas which he had put forward in his memoir from Strasburg, and afterwards in his private letters. He wished Napoleon

[1] Thirth-fourth bulletin.

to use victory with moderation and even with generosity. He advised him to display clemency towards Austria. The more complete our success had been, the easier and more politic became this conduct,—according to him,—for we had more chance of gaining the sympathy of this power, as we were about to raise an enemy reduced to the greatest distress. He was willing that Austria should be deprived of Venice and her territories in Suabia, for that would prevent any fresh ground of quarrel; but he thought she ought to have ample compensation given her on the Danube, where we had everything to gain by seeing her acquire provinces that Russia coveted. It was requisite to tranquillise her by separating the crowns of France and Italy; it was even desirable to disarm her susceptibility by allowing Venice again to become an independent state, instead of annexing it to the French Empire. If these concessions were made, Austria, strengthened by a war which might well have ruined her, would be attached to us not only by the ties of gratitude, but by those of a lasting interest. Our policy need no longer be a perpetual menace against the European system; and in the event of a fresh war we should find, in the very centre of the Continent, a point of support far more solid than versatile Prussia.

This counsel was as far-sighted as it was sensible, for it was by no means incompatible with a good understanding with Prussia. It rather implied that if an alliance with this power were preferable, as she had only forsaken us because she placed her scruples above her interests, it was requisite to offer her, independent of the advantages that would insure us her co-operation, certain pledges of the peace of Europe in the future. But Napoleon, who even before Austerlitz would not listen to this advice, was still less disposed to follow it, now that he had destroyed the army of the coalition. He had long since given up his programme of Ulm. This first project, however ambitious it may have been, appeared to him nothing more than a timid and antiquated sketch. It was no longer Venice and the Tyrol and the Vorarlberg and the territories in Suabia, that he wanted to take from Austria, but Friuli, Istria, and

Dalmatia, and even these conquests were only the first-fruits of what he purposed to derive from his victory. Still he did not venture to manifest at once the whole extent of his claims, although he was bound beforehand by treaties with the Electors of Bavaria, Wurtemberg, and Baden, who were to receive from him the German provinces which he took from Austria. He wanted, first of all, to ascertain the disposition of Prussia. To gain time, to settle certain questions vaguely, particularly those which related to the long-promised separation of the two crowns of France and Italy,—a separation which Napoleon derisively proposed to adjourn till England had *re-established the equilibrium of the seas*,[1] to make no definite engagement, and to avoid speaking of Naples, which the rupture of the neutrality was about to place at our mercy,—such was the work assigned to Talleyrand. Not knowing yet whether he should not be forced to break with Prussia, Napoleon admitted the possibility of making a compromise on some points; for instance, to pardon the queen of Naples on condition that she dismissed Damas and Acton; but before he decided anything, he wished to see D'Haugwitz, and discover his real sentiments. He accordingly hastened to return to Vienna (December 12th), leaving Talleyrand at Brünn to confer with the Austrian negotiators.

M. d'Haugwitz was waiting for Napoleon in a state of agitation that was justified by the false position in which his Government was placed. Of the two allies with which the Prussian cabinet was most closely associated, one was incapable of acting, and the other was making peace, after surrendering at discretion. There remained a third—England—but from her they could hope for no effective support. If the war continued, Prussia would have to bear alone the shock of Napoleon's armies, and such a prospect occasioned her the greatest alarm. It was, moreover, difficult for her to extricate herself honourably from this situation, for if she was freed from her obligations towards Austria, she was not released from those to England and Russia. These circumstances, of which Napoleon was

[1] Napoleon to Talleyrand, December 13, 1805.

perfectly aware, though he had still but incomplete notions of the treaty of Potsdam, gave him great advantage over the Prussian negotiator, and he hastened to turn it to account with his customary assurance. He displayed before M. d'Haugwitz, by turns, the indignation of an ally betrayed and rewarded for his services by the blackest ingratitude, and the anger of an irritated conqueror impatient to revenge himself. He feigned an inability to understand the real and legitimate grievances which Prussia had invoked in support of the sudden change in her policy, and only to have a vague idea of the violations of territory, and offensive proceedings, which had driven her to it. D'Haugwitz, intimidated, trembling lest he should draw upon his country the calamities of a disastrous war, had the weakness to allow himself to be won by this comedy, or the baseness to appear to be duped by it, at a moment when an energetic demonstration from him would alone have succeeded in tempering the inordinate ambition which agitated Napoleon's mind. He allowed him to play the part of accuser, feebly defended himself against his reproaches, was in short confused and dejected when he ought to have answered firmly. This was exactly what Napoleon wanted. When the Emperor thought he had sufficiently frightened the diplomatist by his threats, he suddenly changed his language, and instead of the declaration of war, which he had led M. d'Haugwitz to apprehend, he offered him his alliance and the cession of Hanover. But, in resigning himself to make this great sacrifice, he required an answer on the spot. He would not submit to a longer deliberation. The negotiator was to choose immediately between a territorial acquisition and war. D'Haugwitz had always been a partisan of union at any price with France. He had never shown any very great scruples either about honour or patriotism. He did not even perceive how ignominious this transaction was for his country. He was dazzled, and eagerly caught at the bait that was presented to him, hoping to be received in Prussia as a national benefactor, for he was going to take back to his sovereign an aggrandisement, instead of the declaration

of war which he had feared. He accordingly signed at the sitting, subject to the ratification by his Government, a treaty of alliance offensive and defensive, by which Prussia received Hanover in exchange for the Margravate of Anspach, which Napoleon was to cede to Bavaria, and the principality of Neufchâtel, which he wished to unite to France (December 15th).

Napoleon had no sooner concluded this arrangement with Prussia than he unmasked his claims upon Austria, Not only did he impose them in all their rigour, but he raised fresh ones, which this success had suggested to him. He would no longer make a compromise about the Tyrol, and he required Dalmatia besides. With regard to Naples, Talleyrand was not even to allow it to be mentioned, for the time was come 'to chastise *that rascal* (*cette coquine*).'[1] But yesterday, he was still willing to accept the dismissal of Acton; to-day, the crimes of the queen of Naples have filled up the measure, and nothing but her expulsion can satisfy Napoleon! It has been said, in explanation of this sudden change, that in the interval he had been apprised of the rupture of Neapolitan neutrality.[2] Nothing is further from the truth. He had seen and subdued M. d'Haugwitz. That was all. The only concession that Napoleon consented to was a reduction of the contributions to fifty millions. Talleyrand was to inform the plenipotentiaries that he had come to an arrangement with Prussia, and that each day's delay would only aggravate their situation. Napoleon did not admit the idea that the king of Prussia could refuse to ratify a treaty which dishonoured him, but which insured him such great advantages. At all events, he gave out this consent as certain, and drew the same advantage from it as if he already possessed it. He transferred the seat of negotiations from Brünn to Presburg, in order to be nearer. At the same time he concentrated his troops, and made them take up a threaten-

[1] Napoleon to Talleyrand, December 14, 1805.

[2] Thiers. The letter of December 13, in which Napoleon gives Talleyrand permission to make a compromise with regard to Naples, clearly proves that he was at that time aware of the queen's defection.

ing attitude, as if he expected a rupture. The negotiators, isolated, disconcerted by so many surprises, trembling lest the exigencies which swelled each day should increase still more, resigned themselves to the hard law of necessity, and consented to sign the disastrous Treaty of Presburg, the most humiliating that had ever been imposed on the House of Austria.

Austria gave up Venice, Istria, Friuli, and Dalmatia, which were annexed to the kingdom of Italy; the Tyrol and the Vorarlberg, which went to enrich Bavaria; the territories in Suabia, which were destined for Wurtemberg; and Breisgau, and Ortenau with the town of Constance, which were ceded to the Elector of Baden. She renounced her rights over the immediate nobility; she gave up that powerful patronage which had done so much for Austrian influence in Germany; she recognised the titles of king awarded to the Electors of Bavaria and Wurtemberg; she likewise accepted all that we had done in Italy, and she consented to say nothing about Naples. As indemnity for so many sacrifices she received the principality of Würzburg for one of her archdukes. This short war had made her lose her best provinces, equal to a fifth of her territory, and almost all her outlets to the sea. Instead of imposing on her conditions so painful and so humiliating, it would have been better to deal her at once a mortal blow, for she could not live in the situation we had made for her, and her policy inevitably became a permanent conspiracy against us. We ought to have annihilated her completely, or else have offered her acceptable conditions. To allow her to live after having reduced her to despair, was to substitute a necessary enmity for what had hitherto been merely an enmity produced by circumstances. This thought filled all minds, on learning the stipulations of Presburg. 'My children,' said the Archduke Charles to his soldiers, when he paid them off, '*take rest till we begin again.*'[1]

This danger could not escape Napoleon's keen sight. Did he then at least try to parry it, by creating friendships

[1] De Maistre: *Correspondance Diplomatique*, January 31, 1806.

to counterbalance such natural hatred? He had imagined nothing better, in this respect, than the treaty which D'Haugwitz had carried to Berlin,—a treaty which Prussia would be forced to ratify, in order to avoid war, but one that she could not accept without deep humiliation, and a strong desire for revenge. This power was in reality so closely bound up with England, that she was on the point of receiving from London her first payment of subsidies. It was placing her in a cruel extremity to constrain her to receive as a present the patrimony of the very sovereign who subsidised her. There was something graver in it than a trick played upon the Prussian cabinet: it was a deep wound inflicted on national pride and the just susceptibilities of honour and patriotism of which Napoleon never took any account in his calculations. Instead therefore of gaining us an ally here, his policy was about to create us a fresh enmity; and it was a singular illusion of his to believe that he should be able to neutralise this enmity by his three dependents,—the Electors of Baden, Wurtemberg, and Bavaria. The aggrandisement of territory which he had obtained for them did not compensate for the loss of influence, consideration, and popularity, which they were to suffer from our protection. Germany considered them as mere clerks of Napoleon, and in ostentatiously announcing, in his thirty-seventh bulletin, that they had received the titles of kings as a well-merited recompense, he exposed them to the hatred of their compatriots, who henceforth regarded them as traitors.

This was making these princes pay very dearly for an alliance which they had rather submitted to than sought. Their gratitude was the more doubtful from the fact that, independent of a vassalage so thinly disguised, Napoleon was intending to impose on them bonds of another character, which were calculated to wound them on their most sensitive point. This sovereign by hazard, who had just violently forced his way into the circle of kings, needed family alliances to wipe out the remembrance of his humble origin. Napoleon had on this point all the prejudices of the vulgar. He was as much alive to the prestige of birth

and rank as a bourgeois under the ancient *régime*, and the ex-terrorist was dying of envy to unite himself to the royal races. He had already at different times sounded some of the petty German princes on this subject, but his advances had been coldly received. At the opening of the new campaign, when he allied himself to the Electors of Bavaria, Wurtemberg, and Baden, he had renewed these overtures, through his representative, General Thiard. But they showed very little eagerness in the affair. Even the Elector of Bavaria, who of all these princes was the best disposed towards us, turned a deaf ear. His daughter, the Princess Augusta, whom Napoleon wished to give to Prince Eugène, was on the point of marrying the son of the Elector of Baden, and the electress, his wife, exclaimed at the very idea of the misalliance that was proposed to her. As for the Elector of Wurtemberg, whose daughter Napoleon had reserved for his brother Jérôme, he was still more averse to this union, for he had very reluctantly become our ally, and our troops had been obliged to employ the artillery to force the gates of Stuttgart. Each of these princes rejected with secret horror a hand still stained with the blood of the Duc d'Enghien. But after Austerlitz the parts were changed. What Napoleon had before solicited, he now required. He no longer spoke as an ally, but as a master. As in the barbarous epochs when conquest was followed by rape, these daughters of kings became the ransom for the states of their fathers. The Princess Augusta, torn from her betrothed, was married to a man who was not consulted any more than herself, and who only knew her from having seen her portrait a few days before on a china cup.[1] The betrothed himself was united by force to the Princess Stéphanie de Beauharnais, and Jérôme, who had married, in Baltimore, an honourable and distinguished person, but who had no title, and by whom he had already one child, was at the same time unmarried, and remarried to the daughter of the Elector of Wurtemberg.

These brilliant marriages, however, obtained at the point of the sword, and the territorial changes which had been,

[1] Napoleon to Prince Eugène, December 31, 1805.

or were to be, the price of them,—Austria diminished, Russia beaten, Prussia humiliated, the Germanic Confederation remodelled to our profit,—all these advantages were only a small portion of benefits which Napoleon intended to derive from the victory of Austerlitz. He proposed to make a radical transformation in the whole European system. When, at the commencement of the Empire, he was heard to evoke the name and memory of Charlemagne, he had been thought to make a fanciful comparison, using words for the sake of effect,—words which had no real connection with the facts. After Austerlitz it was evident that he had meant something else than a mere chance expression. Not that the federation of kingdoms, by which he wished to surround himself, had in reality anything in common with the ancient Carlovingian federation. What he had in view under the name of federation was the strictest and most absolute unity. The vassal kings were to be nothing more than the humble instruments of his own domination. They were a disguise to which he had recourse, because the pure and simple acknowledgment of his projects would have made him too many enemies in the actual state of European conquest.

It was necessary to cloak it under an appearance of independence and autonomy, and it was solely to create this illusion that he thought of erecting thrones for his brothers, and founding principalities for his generals and functionaries. But under the imposing titles of kings, princes, dukes, grand and petty feudatories, all these men were mere servitors subservient to an iron centralisation. He flattered himself that the people would be duped by these appearances, and that the moment his creatures bore the titles of independent sovereigns, they would be regarded as the national representatives. Nations could then believe themselves free and independent, under the guardianship of this domesticity of princes and kings, whom he himself governed as an absolute master. Such were the essential characteristics of this famous federative system, which has been represented to us as a conception of genius, but which was in reality only the wretched expedient of despotism.

The rupture of so many ancient ties, which bound together nations who were about to be disposed of without their consent,—the contempt openly displayed for traditions, customs, and feelings that united them to their old dynasties, for their patriotic pride, for their dearest national sympathies; the overthrow of their institutions,—the complete change, in fact, introduced into all their conditions of life,—gave rise to the supposition that, according to an expression that has been greatly abused, *they were ripe*, at any rate to a certain extent, for these transformations. It was thought that we brought them some compensation, if anything could compensate for the loss of liberty; that a revolution not less radical had taken place in all their ideas, and that we might reckon on the support of this revolution for the success of the new state of things that was enforced on them. It was nothing of the kind; the so much vaunted exportation of the benefits of the *Civil Code* was by no means calculated to make them forget the evils of servitude. Even where it improved their administration by simplifying it, as in Germany, they saw clearly that this was done solely to facilitate the exercise of despotism. Napoleon never had a moment's anxiety about the real state of their feelings and opinions. Accustomed only to see in states organised force, and to take no account whatever of moral forces, never to discover nations behind governments, he thought, because he had killed a few thousand men at Austerlitz, that everything was finished, and that there was nothing beyond. Because a surprise had gained him a field of battle, he fancied that he could dispose of the nations of Europe. Because he had disarmed cabinets, he thought he could treat the people as a *caput mortuum* which he could operate on at discretion, without paying any attention to their will, their interests, or their character. Whatever explanation may be given to this error, it assumed, in short, such brutal proportions that it shows his want of penetration as much as his want of moral sense.

Napoleon inaugurated the new system by the downfall of the royal house of Naples. It was from Vienna itself that he gave notice of this event to Europe, as soon as his

arrangement with M. d'Haugwitz had convinced him that he had nothing more to fear from Prussia. 'General Saint-Cyr,' he said, in his thirty-seventh bulletin, 'is proceeding by forced marches to Naples, to punish the treachery of the queen, and *hurl from the throne this guilty woman, who has so shamefully violated all that is sacred among men!*' To those who tried to intercede for her, he replied, 'Were hostilities to recommence, and had the nation to sustain a war thirty years, *such atrocious perfidy could not be pardoned!*'

But if it was such an atrocious act of perfidy on the part of the queen to have unexpectedly broken the treaty of neutrality, after all the insults from Napoleon of which she had to complain, what can be said of his own conduct, when in time of peace, and on the eve of concluding this treaty of neutrality, he had given orders to Saint-Cyr to march upon Naples and throw the court into the sea? On whose side were the provocations, the exactions, the violations of territory, the violence and insult, which had led the queen to take this desperate step? Had not Napoleon proved, in a thousand ways, that he had resolved to seize her kingdom on the first opportunity? Had he not threatened twenty times to reduce her to a state of beggary, and not leave her sufficient ground in her states to raise her tomb? Could she fail to know that he had been on the point of carrying these threats into execution, and that he had only been prevented by the continental war? By inserting in the *Moniteur* this treaty of neutrality which he had wrung from her by force, had he not taken care to warn her that '*the interest of France counselled the securing of this kingdom by a useful and easy conquest?*' Was it likely that Bonaparte, with his character and antecedents, would deprive himself for long of a useful and easy conquest which the interest of France counselled?

The disloyalty of the Court of Naples was therefore the necessary result of a far more odious perfidy, which had been disguised with sufficient skill to deceive superficial opinion. The treachery of the queen of Naples was at once established as an indisputable fact, and Napoleon strengthened this impression by a boisterous display of

feigned anger. Our soldiers, led by Masséna, Saint-Cyr, and Regnier, marched upon Naples, with the conviction that they were going to overthrow the very personification of imposture and bad faith. They were simply going to erect with their republican hands a new throne, which Napoleon had long before destined for his brother Joseph, the principal of the grand feudatories who were to gather round the new Western Empire.

In consequence of this conquest, which, as Napoleon had predicted, could not but be easy, but which was not, however, achieved till several provinces had been laid waste with fire and sword, the whole of Italy fell under our domination. Of all the ancient Italian sovereigns, Pope Pius VII. alone imagined that he still possessed states in the peninsula. He was not long allowed to retain this illusion. The pontiff had made a Charlemagne. He had worked with all his strength for the elevation and grandeur of Bonaparte. In spite of the reprobation of all sincere Catholics, and the scruples of his own conscience, he had gone to Paris to cover the murderer of Vincennes with the prestige of religion, in the hope that this power, so formidable to all others, would protect and benefit himself. It was time for him to receive his reward. Though deeply wounded by all the disappointments he had experienced during his stay in Paris, he had never openly expressed his feelings; but he had resolved to retaliate, and it was easy to find an opportunity of doing so, owing to the close relations which the Concordat had established between the Court of Rome and the French Government. It soon presented itself under the form of a request which Napoleon made to him to cancel Jérôme's marriage with Miss Patterson. The civil marriage could be annulled without much difficulty, but the religious tie subsisted, and it required ecclesiastical authority to dissolve that. Napoleon did not hesitate to ask the Pope for this dissolution, persuaded that he would not refuse that slight service after all the concession he had made. The Court of Rome had in reality often shown, especially in affairs of this kind, how easily she could accommodate her maxims to circumstances, and

authorise exceptions to her best established rules, when an advantage was to be obtained by doing so. In this case so much was not asked of her, for Napoleon had joined to his demand a copy of the opinion of most eminent casuists, and even of the Pope's theologian himself, proving that by the decisions of ecclesiastical law this marriage was void. But to his great surprise and irritation he met with an invincible resistance from the meek Pius VII. The Pontiff wrote the Emperor a letter, full of the most tender protestations of friendship. He clearly recognised 'that the secrecy of the marriage constituted a canonical cause of nullity,' according to a special decree of the Council of Trent. Unhappily the closest and most minute investigations had failed to prove that this decree had ever been published in the town of Baltimore. He was grieved not to be able to pronounce the dissolution of the marriage. If he were to do so, 'he would render himself guilty of an abominable abuse before the tribunal of God!'[1]

These unexpected scruples from a man who had shown himself so accommodating in affairs of far graver importance, had produced a coolness in Napoleon's intercourse with the Court of Rome. It was only the commencement of hostilities. On both sides, at the time of the coronation, as at that of the Concordat, there had been too much calculation, too much artifice, too much mental reserve, and too much deceit for dissension to end there. On entering on the campaign against Austria, Napoleon treated the territory of the Pope with the same want of ceremony that he usually displayed towards feeble states. He occupied Ancona by one of Saint-Cyr's detachments, without even taking the trouble to inform the Pontifical Government of his intention. This manner of proceeding was by no means new to Bonaparte, and by coming to crown him at Paris, the Pope had himself sanctioned a long series of acts of the same kind; but when he felt himself the victim of this kind of exploit, he began to find them less glorious. On the 3d of November he wrote to protest against the taking possession of Ancona, and to complain 'of the vexations and annoyances to which

[1] Pius VII. to Napoleon, June 5, 1805.

he had been exposed since his return from Paris; of the poor return his Majesty had made him for the affection he had vowed to him,' and to claim the rights of a neutrality that all Europe had recognised and respected.

Napoleon did not reply to the Pope's letter till after Austerlitz. He had received it in the midst of all his projects for the restoration of the empire of Charlemagne, while he was indulging in his Carlovingian dream. The Pope was, to a certain extent, Napoleon's accomplice in this grand historical parody. He had invoked, with unlimited complaisance, the name and remembrance of Charlemagne, so long as he had hoped to derive advantage from it for his own power. He was now to learn the danger of these ambitious anachronisms, and experience what a Charlemagne was in an epoch without belief.

Napoleon's answer, though courteous in form, at once made the pontifical ambitions fall to the ground. When Charlemagne made a pact with the Pope, he really treated as a power with a power, because behind the pontiff there was at that time something more than the little Roman State—there was the world of believers. Behind Pius VII., on the contrary, there was nothing but an enfeebled religion and an expiring spiritual authority. The immense moral force which his predecessors personified, and which permitted them to resist the masters of the world, was nothing more than a shadow which could impose no control on Napoleon. The two powers, which had filled the Middle Ages with their struggles, were replaced face to face. Both were anachronisms which could not last in the modern world, but one was armed with a material power of incalculable strength, while the other was only a souvenir and a sort of archæological disinterment. The dream of the papacy was the first to vanish; for when Bonaparte invoked, in justification of the occupation of Ancona, his duty as 'protector of the Holy See, and successor of the kings of the second and third race,' he rested on his sword, which was at least a real force, while Pius VII. was only the sovereign of an imaginary spiritual empire.

Napoleon plainly informed the Pope that if he had

treated the Holy See with so little ceremony, the blame lay on Pius VII. for his refusal of 'all requests, even of those that involved the greatest consequences to religion; as, for example, when *it was proposed to hinder Protestantism from raising its head in France.*' This allusion to the possible reversion of the crown of France to the Protestant children of Jérôme was incorrect, since Jérôme had been excluded from the imperial succession. 'He would, however, continue to protect the Holy See, in spite of the false steps, the ingratitude, and the ill-will of the men who had thrown off mask during these three months, and who had believed him ruined. . . . His Holiness was, moreover, free to welcome the English and the Caliph of Constantinople; but as he did not wish to expose Cardinal Fesch to insult, he should replace him by a secular.'[1]

In a letter written the same day to the cardinal, who was to communicate it to the Court of Rome, Napoleon explained more clearly the nature of the *protection* which he henceforth intended to impose on the Holy See. 'Since these fools,' he said, 'see no objection to a Protestant occupying the throne of France, I shall send them a Protestant ambassador. . . . I am a religious man, but I am no bigot Constantine separated the civil from the military, and I can also nominate a senator to command in Rome in my name. . . . *For the Pope I am Charlemagne, because, like Charlemagne, I unite the crown of France with that of the Lombards,* and my empire borders upon the East. . . . I shall make no outward change if the Pope behaves well; if not, I shall reduce him to be Bishop of Rome.' Pius VII., who felt even more mortification than fear, replied with increased gentleness and unction to Napoleon's reproaches, which he well knew were merely pretexts, except the grievance relative to Jérôme's marriage. Even on this point, if he had opposed the wishes of the Emperor, he had done so with extreme regret, and *solely because he had found nothing in the divine laws that would authorise him to follow the inclination of his heart.*[2] He denied, moreover, and

[1] Napoleon to Pius VII., January 13, 1806.
[2] Pius VII. to Napoleon, January 26.

with perfect truth, that he had ever given the slightest welcome to enemies of the Emperor, 'or had ever believed that his Majesty was ruined, of which he was accused in the letter.' Pius VII. had in reality written at the moment that Napoleon was entering as a conqueror into Vienna, long after the victory of Ulm was known. Then passing on to another order of ideas, instead of discussing the singular theory of *protectorate* advanced by Bonaparte, he confined himself by that deep and covert irony which is familiar to the weak, and in which priests and women excel, to reminding him of the deceptive promises which had been held out to him to lure him to Paris. Now that Napoleon had added such glorious acquisitions to his former conquests, and *since he had ascribed to God the success of his arms, it was to be hoped that he would also give back to God the fruit of his conquests*, by making the Church participate in it. 'Your Majesty has become the sovereign of Venice. This extension of his domains in Italy conceives in us the pleasing hope that the time has come when the Church will recover this part of the patrimony of St. Peter, of which the Revolution had robbed her.' An argument of irreproachable logic, and one that was calculated to exasperate Napoleon so much the more, that he flattered himself that he had terrified the Court of Rome, which seemed little troubled by this display of anger. Besides, this very candid reply, to use the Pope's own expression, though it was very studied candour, contained nothing which furnished him with grounds for attacking those who sent it.

This time Napoleon threw off the mask. 'Your Holiness,' he replied to the Pope, 'is the sovereign of Rome, *but I am her Emperor!* All my enemies must be hers. No agent, therefore, of the king of Sardinia, no English, Russians, or Swedes, ought to be allowed to reside in Rome or in your states, nor should any vessel belonging to any of these Governments enter your ports. . . . I am accountable *to God*, who has chosen my arm to re-establish religion. And how could I see it damaged, without pain, by the delays of the Court of Rome? Those who leave Germany in anarchy *will have to answer for it before God;*

those who postpone the despatch of *my bishops'* bulls *will have to answer for it before God!* . . . It is not by sleeping that *I have reorganised religion in France*, in such a manner that there is no other country in which it is productive of so much good, or where it is so much respected.'[1]

These singular expressions show that Napoleon already considered himself as something more than the Pope's suzerain, for he went nearly as far as to dispute with him his title of vicar of God. More zealous for religion than the Pope, he did not scruple to point out to him the superiority of the services which he had rendered to the Divinity. He boldly summoned him to the tribunal of this supreme judge, and he displayed in this pious buffoonery the same imperturbable assurance which had succeeded so well with the ulemas of Cairo. This positive declaration of principles was followed by a still clearer and more imperious communication, addressed to Cardinal Fesch, dictating to him his rule of conduct for the future. He was to require the immediate expulsion of all the English, Russians, and Swedes dwelling in the Roman States. 'I do not intend,' said Napoleon, '*the Court of Rome to mix any longer in politics*. . . . I have given orders to Prince Joseph to aid you. . . . Tell them that I have my eyes open, that I am only deceived as far as I choose; *that I am Charlemagne, their Emperor*, and that I am to be treated as such. I shall inform the Pope of my intentions in a very few words, if he does not acquiesce in them, I shall reduce him to the same condition in which he was before Charlemagne.'[2]

What had after all taken place since that Paris journey, which Napoleon had obtained by so many entreaties, compliments, and promises? What misdeeds could he reproach this feeble old man with, whom he was treating so harshly, after having deceived and intoxicated him by giving him such false hopes? Pius VII. had refused to cancel Jérôme's marriage, from scruples that may not have been sincere, but his conscience was sole judge of this. He had, besides,

[1] Napoleon to Pius VII., February 13, 1806.
[2] Napoleon to Fesch, February 13, 1806.

hindered the despatch of ecclesiastical affairs by delays that were very probably calculated, but in this he did not exceed his rights as spiritual sovereign. It was not, therefore, the misdeeds of the Pope which had filled up the measure, but it was Napoleon's strength, which had prodigiously increased. Wounded pride and the victory of Austerlitz were all that had been needed to make Napoleon thus pitiless towards the Court of Rome. Between the state of oppression to which he now reduced her and complete ruin it was only a question of time. From the moment the Pope refused to submit to all the Emperor's views, his expulsion from Rome may be considered as a fact virtually achieved. There remained only for the carrying out of the work to find the method, the pretext, and the opportunity.

To the great fiefs of Rome and Naples Napoleon resolved to add Holland, where the grand pensioner Schimmelpenninck had, unknown to himself, only been holding the post for a second brother of the Emperor. When the Anglo-Swedes had threatened Holland during our campaign in Austria, Napoleon had sent Louis there with an army, which had merely taken up a position on the frontiers of Westphalia, and was soon after disengaged by the victory of Austerlitz. Louis came to congratulate his brother on his way to Strasburg. Napoleon received him very coldly. 'Why did you leave Holland?' he asked. 'They were pleased to see you there; you ought to have remained.' Louis spoke of the reports that were circulating in the country, of its monarchical transformation. 'These reports,' he said, 'are not agreeable to that free and estimable nation, nor do they please me either.'[1]

This repugnance of Napoleon's brothers to enter into his views is characteristic, and cannot moreover be called in question, though some historians have vainly endeavoured to explain his absurd system of vassal royalties by his desire to satisfy their cupidity and ambition. Joseph had already refused the throne of Italy, giving, it is true, an excuse that was rather a pretext than a serious reason, and in order to induce him to accept that of Naples, it was requisite to do

[1] *Documents historiques sur la Hollande* par le roi Louis.

almost violence to his feelings. Louis, whose integrity and disinterestedness are beyond dispute, was freer still from all cupidity of this kind, but he was not consulted any more than Joseph or Jérôme. This curious fact not only proves that the utopia of a Carlovingian resurrection belongs to Napoleon alone, but it strikingly shows the opinion his brothers had of him, for their scruples arose quite as much out of mistrust of so exacting a master, as out of mistrust of fortune. But, as King Louis wrote, it was not their will but his that ruled, and they had to choose between Lucien's *expatriation* and the throne that was offered them.

'Napoleon,' says this prince in his *Mémoires*, 'informed Louis that if he was not consulted in this affair, *it was because a subject cannot but obey.* Louis reflected that he might be constrained by force; that, as the Emperor was resolute, the same would happen to him which had happened to Joseph, who, for having refused Italy, was now in Naples. He made, however, a last attempt. He wrote to his brother that *he felt the necessity of the Emperor's brothers retiring from France*, but he asked for the government of Genoa or Piedmont. Napoleon refused.'[1] Holland was less consulted even than Louis. 'Monsieur Talleyrand,' wrote Bonaparte, the 14th of March 1806, 'I have seen M. Verhuell this evening. This is the way in which I have settled the question. Holland is without an executive power, they must have one. I shall give them Prince Louis. . . . Instead of the grand pensioner there will be a king. . . . *The reasons which have led to this determination are, that without it, I shall not be able to restore peace to any colony.* . . . Before twenty days have passed Prince Louis must make his entry into Amsterdam.' This is the extent of those pretended supplications of the Dutch patriots to obtain King Louis. Our domination could not but be held in execration in a country ruined by our exactions, and by all the calamities that we had brought upon her, by drawing her in spite of herself into a war against England. Under these circumstances, to allege the offer of a throne in the name of national gratitude was insulting misfortune

[1] *Documents sur la Hollande.*

by the most odious comedy. Louis sorrowfully yielded. He submitted to royalty as a penance, but with a sincere desire to alleviate the sufferings of his new subjects. He appeared among the sovereigns of his time as a sort of monarch of the rueful countenance, but, though troubled and dismayed beforehand at the idea of the trials which he foresaw, he was far from suspecting what a hard slavery was hidden under this title of king, which a just presentiment had made him dread.

Napoleon completed the system of grand fiefs by the creation of inferior sovereignties, which had no other object than to insure large endowments for his relations and servants of every kind, and without costing anything to the treasury. His sister Elisa had already Lucca and Piombino; Eugène had Upper Italy; Pauline Borghèse obtained the duchy of Guastalla, which she very quickly sold; Berthier had the principality of Neufchâtel, which Prussia was to cede to us in exchange for Hanover; Murat had the duchy of Berg, which Bavaria ceded us; Bernadotte had Ponte-Corvo, and Talleyrand had the principality of Benevento, two fiefs formed with the domains, which from time immemorial the papacy had disputed with the kingdom of Naples; Lebrun was made Duke of Piacenza. The Venetian States alone furnished twelve other fiefs, which were to be disposed of later. This was only a first sketch of that vast hierarchy which was to restore the splendour of the great empire. These docile satellites announced a complete planetary system, which was about to gravitate around the imperial star, their centre and their focus, but they were to have no other brilliancy than that which they derived from their creator. These new sovereigns were still more dependent than the phantoms of royalty, of which they were to form the retinue; they were in reality a mere fiscal creation, they conferred no power; they were, in fact, nothing but appanages, or, to say the truth, an organised spoliation. Our exactions from the vanquished had hitherto assumed a less offensive form, because they had not been raised in the name of a person. They were made in the name and for the profit of a great state, and it might have

been thought that they were consecrated to general interests. The oppressors were now in presence of the oppressed. The conquered were charged with the expense of the conquest, and the subjects of these new feudatories were only to know their masters by the sums of money extorted from them. This was a singular means of rendering bureaucratic feudality lasting and popular.

The natural crowning-piece of this grand edifice was the new organisation which Napoleon was intending to give to the Germanic Confederation. Before, however, he unmasked this last project, which threatened more for the peace of Europe than any of those which he had hitherto realised, he wanted to enchain Prussia, by forcing her to sign the treaty of Schönbrunn, and to try the chance of reconciliation either with England or Russia,—intending, according to his custom, if his overtures were accepted by these powers, to effect this vast change between the preliminaries and the signing of peace, and if his advances were not favourably received, to defy their opposition. D'Haugwitz had taken to Berlin the offer of Hanover, instead of a declaration of war, but he had met with a very different reception from that he had expected. Every one felt how insulting and contemptuous this proposition was for the Prussian nation. Still trembling with indignation against the oppressor of Europe, she was not only to lay down arms before she had fought, and abandon her allies, as in the case of an unfortunate war, but she was required to dishonour herself by accepting their spoils, and turning against them the sword which she had taken up for their defence. Napoleon must have considered the Prussian nation as a set of automata, unworthy of the name of men, if he supposed that they would be insensible to the ignominy of the part he induced them to act. The revolt of national honour manifested itself with extreme energy in all classes of the population, and even at the court, where these feelings are generally too much blunted to show much susceptibility. The king himself, though governed by fear and interest, experienced deep humiliation at the idea of ratifying such conditions, for they did not even offer him the excuse of a

gift of sufficient value to efface the disgrace which attended it. The acquisition of Hanover did not bring him in reality, after deducting the territorial cessions, which were to be the price of it, an increase of more than four or five hundred thousand inhabitants, and it was for this small state that he had to risk his popularity, the honour of his crown, and the prospect of an almost certain war with England! On the other hand, if he refused his ratification he would be immediately involved in war with a victorious army, which was encamped a few marches from his frontier, and to which he could only oppose a very inferior number of troops.

In this cruel extremity the king resolved to yield, by ratifying the treaty with certain modifications, which he deemed necessary either for his own dignity or the interest of his states. He especially insisted on the striking out of the expression 'alliance offensive and defensive,' which rendered him responsible for all the changes that Napoleon had made, or proposed to make, in Europe. He particularly desired not to recognise the downfall of the House of Naples, and only to receive Hanover provisionally till he had obtained the assent of England; lastly, he presented as a necessary complement to his acquisition of Hanover the annexation of the towns of Hamburg, Bremen, and Lubeck, reckoning on this new aggrandisement to silence the complaints of his subjects. D'Haugwitz set off for Paris to submit to Napoleon the altered treaty, and Laforest, our representative in Berlin, consented to sign it, subject, however, to the ratification of his sovereign.

Meanwhile a great event occurred, which had for some time been foreseen. William Pitt, the most formidable and the most persevering of Napoleon's enemies, died on the 23d of January 1806, worn out by consuming conflicts between power and liberty, and overwhelmed by the victory of Austerlitz. Fox, his great rival in eloquence, if not in political genius, had just been called to the Ministry. Napoleon immediately saw all the advantage he could draw from a misfortune which would complete the ruin of his enemies on the Continent, and from the elevation of a man

whose open and generous character allowed of too many inconsistencies and illusions to inspire fear in an adversary capable of resisting him. Fox did not live long enough either to justify or entirely disappoint the in reality not very flattering hopes which were centred on him. It is evident, however, that he was not equal to the task which Pitt had bequeathed to him. His premature death at the very commencement of his administration, added to the admiration felt for his character, gave rise to very exaggerated regrets from those who maintained that Napoleon's ambition was not incompatible with the peace of Europe. Bonaparte himself endeavoured to gain credit for this erroneous opinion. 'Fox's death,' he often said, 'was one of the fatalities of my career! . . . If he had lived the people's cause would have gained him, and we should have created a new order in Europe.'[1] The proof, however, that this opinion is very questionable is that in the first place Fox, after all the philanthropic effusions by which he began, was afterwards forced to adopt, purely and simply, Pitt's policy; and secondly, that the first effect produced upon Napoleon by Fox's elevation to the Ministry was to render him much more exacting towards the continental powers. He had had some personal intercourse with Fox at the time of the treaty of Amiens, and had endeavoured to flatter this benevolent optimist, whose character was ill-fitted to penetrate the calculations of so sinister a policy. He had regarded him as an adversary who would be easily duped, and who would give him far less trouble than the great minister whom he had everywhere met on his path, denouncing his projects as soon as they were formed, and opposing them with an indomitable resolution. What unhoped-for good luck was this substitution of the good and generous Fox for the haughty man, whose penetrating eye and cold contempt had so many times disconcerted imperial charlatanry!

But this fortunate circumstance, which might have insured the peace of Europe, only helped to rekindle war. Napoleon was at that moment on the point of coming to terms with

[1] Las Cases.

Prussia, for the modifications which she proposed in the treaty of Schönbrunn were not exorbitant, and he was, moreover, certain that he could by insisting compel her to renounce a part of them, if not the whole. But he had no sooner learned of Fox's elevation than he changed his mind, and would hear nothing more of the treaty. His first thought was to keep Hanover, in order to be able to make peace more easily with England.[1] This idea, however, which was a wise purpose, was soon abandoned, and Napoleon determined to aggravate the situation of Prussia by forcing her to accept conditions still more onerous than those of the treaty which she had wished to modify. He would see how he could arrange with England later, but in the meantime he flattered himself that he could intimidate her, and constrain her more quickly to make peace, by driving Prussia into the league which was about to inaugurate the continental blockade. Prussia had not only to accept all the conditions of the treaty of Schönbrunn, but to give up the Margravate of Baireuth, recognise all the changes which had taken place in Italy, and engage besides to close the Elbe and the Weser to the English, a clause of far greater gravity, which was equal to a declaration of war against England. D'Haugwitz sorrowfully signed this fresh treaty, but he did not venture this time to carry it to Berlin himself; he sent it by Lucchesini, minister of Prussia in Paris.

There was an excess of cruelty and decision in giving the name of treaty to a pact concluded under such conditions, and in offering it as a pledge of an *eternal union*[2] between the contracting parties. Never had our diplomacy adopted a more impolitic or more disastrous expedient. It could not be supposed that Prussia, whatever may have been her temporary embarrassments, would be foolish enough to make herself so far the slave of France as to accept her own ruin and that of Germany, in order to gratify Napoleon's hatred of England, and aid him in

[1] Napoleon to Talleyrand, February 4, 1806.

[2] This is the exact expression employed in the treaty. See de Clerck: *Recueil des Traites*, etc.

achieving the conquest of the Continent. With very slight concessions, the neutrality and even the alliance of Prussia had hitherto been possible. After such a treaty she became our most implacable enemy, and would only think of fighting as soon as an opportunity occurred of doing so with advantage. Napoleon, moreover, was about to force her to seize this opportunity still more quickly than she expected, by a series of proceedings which rendered her situation more and more intolerable. With him the results of a fault were never long delayed, owing to his invariable system of drawing from success all the fruit that it could yield, and to his belief that Fortune is less wearied by straining her to the utmost, than by letting a single one of her favours escape. The king of Prussia, even before he had fixed his signature to this fatal treaty, had begun to expiate his weakness and avidity. Napoleon occupied Anspach more than a fortnight before the ratification. He had no sooner obtained it than he insulted Hardenberg, the head of the Prussian Cabinet, in the *Moniteur*. This minister had already been favoured with an offensive accusation, in a bulletin dated from Vienna. He again reproached him with *selling himself to the eternal enemies of the Continent*;[1] he called him a *traitor* and a *prejurer*, accused him of *dishonouring himself*, and, in justification of this language, he published a falsified copy of a letter, which this patriotic statesman, before he knew of the treaty of Schönbrunn, had written to Lord Harrowby, to declare 'that a fresh occupation of Hanover by Bonaparte would be considered as directed against Prussia.'[2] Our ambassador in Berlin received orders to break off all intercourse with him. Napoleon informed the king that he reckoned on the dismissal of Hardenberg. He could not tolerate a minister in Prussia who was not completely at his mercy. Unfortunate omen! It was thus that he had begun with the queen of Naples before he took her state. 'Tell M. d'Haugwitz,' he wrote to M. de Talleyrand, 'that it has

[1] *Moniteur* of March 21, 1806.

[2] Schœll: *Histoire abrégée des Traites*, vol. viii. *Mémoires tirés des papiers d'un homme d'état*, vol. ix.

always been supposed that M. de Hardenberg would retire.'[1] The king of Prussia was obliged to sacrifice his minister, taking for a pretext the proud and loyal apology which Hardenberg published of his conduct. To this alarming interference of Napoleon in the internal government of Prussia was soon after added the seizure of four hundred Prussian or German merchant vessels by the British navy, who found in this capture an ample compensation for the temporary closing of the Elbe and the Weser. If Napoleon had wanted to enrich English commerce he could have thought of nothing better than the ridiculous conception of the continental blockade, of which the first result was to destroy all competition with England.

This was only one of the last surprises that awaited the Prussian Cabinet. They had scarcely recovered from their emotion when they learned that the Germanic Confederation, of which Prussia formed part, and whose affairs she had a right to consider as a question in which she was concerned, was about to be reorganised, not only without her consent, but to her detriment. She was not apprised either of still more extraordinary changes, which put her patience to a severe test. The king of Prussia had ratified on the 9th of March the treaty which ceded Hanover to him in full ownership, and as early as the following month of June, Napoleon offered this province to England as a pledge of peace and reconciliation. He offered it before Prussia had given him a single reason for legitimate complaint. The motives which have been alleged in justification of this treachery will not bear examination. When Prussia took possession of Hanover she had shown that she received it reluctantly; her word may be taken on this point, and such scruples did her honour. With regard to the light thrown upon her past conduct by the revelations of the English Parliament there was nothing new for Napoleon. Prussia had been sufficiently punished by her humiliation. Napoleon had in reality only one motive for his conduct—the desire to be reconciled with England. Under the influence of his old illusions about the First Consul, Fox had taken

[1] Napoleon to Talleyrand, March 20.

advantage of the revelation which had been made to him of a project to assassinate Napoleon, to enter into communication with the French Cabinet, in hopes that this overture might lead to some incident favourable to peace. He had always attributed the continuation of the war to the obstinacy and bad faith of Pitt, and to the distrust and ill-will of the continental powers, who according to him had driven to extremities a man who would otherwise have been just and moderate. He was naturally most anxious to act in accordance with his words, and to prove as a minister the excellence of the system which he had maintained as an orator. He could not, moreover, try the experiment of these optimist views under better auspices, for Napoleon had obtained such advantages that he could, without dread of appearing to draw back, make some sacrifices for so desirable an object as the re-establishment of peace with England.

Napoleon fully understood all the importance of such a reconciliation. He had himself devised the false project of assassination which had given rise to Fox's denunciation; he therefore carefully seized the opportunity that was offered him, transmitted to Fox by Talleyrand a fragment of a speech, in which he expressed the desire to make peace on the *basis of the treaty of Amiens*, and after some communications of the most courteous character exchanged between the two Cabinets during the months of March and April 1806, direct parleys, with a view to peace, were opened through Lord Yarmouth, one of the many British subjects who were detained in France in consequence of the rupture of the treaty of Amiens. Talleyrand, who was charged to negotiate with him, agreed, first of all and without any difficulty, to the restitution of Hanover to the king of England. He also admitted the general principle of *uti possidetis*, that is to say, the actual state of possessions, as far as concerned the fresh acquisitions of the two states. He willingly consented to leave the House of Naples in possession of the island of Sicily, which our troops had not succeeded in taking. On one point he was inflexible: he positively refused to admit Russia to a common negotia-

tion. Napoleon had in reality found too many advantages in making peace separately to deviate from this rule. He here proposed to try the same game which he had played so successfully with Prussia and Austria, and in the same manner as he had made use of the treaty, surprised from the weak D'Haugwitz, to crush Austria alone, so to conclude an improvised arrangement with Russia, in order afterwards to impose his will on England.

The emperor of Russia, who had first seized the mouths of the Cattaro, when our troops were on the point of occupying them, had afterwards shown a desire to yield to the complaints of Austria, whom Napoleon rendered responsible for the accident. He had just sent M. d'Oubril to Paris, with full powers, not so much to conclude peace as to discuss its conditions. Napoleon immediately conceived the idea of surprising D'Oubril as he had surprised D'Haugwitz, by making him sign a treaty which would enable him to intimidate and subdue the English Cabinet. The mere arrival of the Russian negotiator sufficed to produce a complete change in his tone and language. Lord Yarmouth, on his return from London, where he had gone to carry Bonaparte's propositions to Fox, found himself in a perfectly new situation. The Emperor would no longer hear of leaving Sicily to the Bourbons. He had received letters from his brother, who declared that he could not do without this island! His generals, moreover, were on the eve of seizing it. England must content herself with Hanover, Malta, and the colonies she had conquered.[1] The more D'Oubril was caught in the snare, the more the French Cabinet became exacting and reserved towards Yarmouth. They amused him with the most ridiculous propositions. They offered to give, as an indemnity to the king of the Two Sicilies, a new domain, *with the Hanseatic towns*, which they would take from Germany! As a general rule, the indemnities proposed by Bonaparte were always

[1] Despatch from Lord Yarmouth to Fox, June 19, 1806: 'Annual Register for the year 1806.' 'State Papers.' The papers of the negotiation were partly published, but with the gravest alterations, in the *Moniteur* of November 26, 1806.

taken from a neighbour. At length, between the 15th and 20th of July Napoleon had made sure of D'Oubril's adhesion to the treaty he had offered to Russia, and the scene again changed immediately. It was of little consequence to him that this treaty was nothing more than a draft, that it contained conditions that were absolutely unacceptable; he had induced Alexander's representative to sign it provisionally, by flattery, intimidation, or corruption, and he availed himself of it as if it were definitive. He suddenly unmasked the grand surprise, which he had clandestinely prepared, while following these different negotiations. 'Talleyrand has declared to me,' wrote Yarmouth to Fox, on the 9th of July, 'he has declared to D'Oubril also, that if peace is made, Germany will remain in its present state, *and that the projected changes will not be published.*'[1] This promise was no sooner made than it was violated. Napoleon published the new plan of the Germanic Confederation, organised under his protectorate; and England, with whom he had first negotiated on the basis of *statu quo*, was forced at once to cede us Sicily, and to see half Germany under our domination.

This theatrical stroke was the exact repetition of the stratagems which had preceded the conclusion of the treaty of Amiens, or rather of those which Napoleon employed in all his negotiations, for with him it was a regular and systematic method. With a deeper knowledge of his character, or even with a rather more attentive study of his political antecedents, these sudden changes, which disconcerted his adversaries, might have been expected with certainty. In diplomacy, as in war, it was when everything seemed gained that his enemies had most reason to distrust him. Endowed to an infinite degree with the art of drawing, seducing, and flattering, in order to inspire a false security, he captivated and won by his promises negotiators who were deceived by his apparent plain dealing. He dwelt on considerations of humanity, on the glory of pacifying Europe after so many conflicts. He associated them in his views for the future, and, in his philanthropic hopes,

[1] 'Annual Register.' 'State Papers.'

he hurried them into engagements without giving them time for reflection; then, when everything was settled, agreed upon, and terminated, at the very moment of signing he suddenly unmasked some formidable proposition, and gave them the alternative of yielding, or seeing him tear up the treaty and make them responsible for the consequences. As the too confiding cabinets had almost always calculated, with regard to their subjects, on the advantages of peace, they most usually submitted and accepted the accomplished fact.

This surprise tended to cool considerably the enthusiastic admiration which Fox felt for Bonaparte, and which had, moreover, already received more than one shock. He felt this disappointment the more keenly that he believed himself free from it, on account of his former connection with Napoleon; but instead of submitting, as the Emperor hoped, he expressed his discontent to Lord Yarmouth, who had shown a great want of firmness, and a want of penetration by producing his powers, contrary to his instructions, and by accepting the discussion on the Sicilian indemnity. Fox associated with him Lord Lauderdale, who was charged to hold stronger language, and return to the starting-point of the negotiations, that is to say, to the maintenance of the *statu quo*. Napoleon then proposed fresh indemnities for the king of the Two Sicilies,—indemnities over which he had no more right than over the Hanseatic towns. He successively offered Albania, which belonged to the Ottoman Empire, with Ragusa, which was an independent republic, and the Balearic Isles, which were the property of his ally the king of Spain. Of the countries which Napoleon proposed to deal with in this strange negotiation there was not a single one over which he could claim even the right of conquest. He did not in reality possess either Hanover, Sicily, the Hanseatic towns, Albania, the Republic of Ragusa, or the Balearic islands; and he ceded them, or laid claim to them by turns, as he would have done with his own property. Never were the possessions of others disposed of with more cynicism and insolence. Meanwhile news arrived from St. Petersburg of a most embarrassing

character for our diplomacy. Alexander scornfully rejected the derisive treaty which Napoleon had imposed on the irresolute D'Oubril, and at the same time a perfect understanding had been established between England and Russia. The whole of this mean and perfidious combination was brought to light and frustrated; and, to complete the misfortune, Fox, the last partisan of peace in the English Cabinet, died on the 13th of September, after having been cured, rather late, of his illusions with regard to the great Emperor. The legitimate requirements of England in respect to Sicily being now entangled with those which Russia renewed on her own account relative to the king of Naples, to the king of Sardinia, and to Dalmatia, the negotiation might still drag on for a time in the quibbles of diplomacy; but it was henceforth doomed. This attempt, so important to the peace of the world, thus fell to the ground. However subtle the arguments that may be brought forward to obscure or misrepresent the facts, there is one conclusion from which it is impossible to escape,—that war remained open between France on one side, Russia, England, and eventually Prussia, on the other, for the sole reason that Napoleon refused to cede Sicily, where not one of his soldiers had as yet put his foot, and that because, he said, Sicily was indispensable to the kingdom of his brother Joseph! There was certainly here an indication of insanity.

War with Russia and England involved war with Prussia, for Napoleon's skill had placed in the hands of these powers a sure means of gaining the king of Prussia. Supposing that the old grievances and the establishment of the new Confederation of the Rhine had not been powerful enough motives for a rupture, it would have been impossible for this prince to resist their solicitations when he learned the unceremonious way in which Napoleon had disposed of a province which formed part of his states; and if the king of Spain had possessed any dignity of character, he would have been immediately drawn into a similar determination by the causes of complaint which had been given him, not only by treating of peace without consulting him, but by

offering his provinces to whoever would take them, by driving his relations out of Naples, and by governing the kingdom of Etruria as a French department. Holland had received still worse treatment. When Napoleon gave this country to Louis, he swore to get her colonies restored to her, and at the very time that he renewed this solemn promise he was offering the same colonies to England. But Holland was too much fettered to be feared. Thus, under pretence of concluding peace separately, our diplomacy had so entangled all questions, exposed all interests, wounded all rights, that when one of these combinations failed all the rest fell to the ground, and Napoleon found himself caught in his own snare and at variance with every one, especially with those whom he called his allies. In this pretended project of pacification the corner-stone of the edifice had rested on a most hazardous hypothesis—that of Alexander's ratification. This ratification was not obtained, and there remained nothing of the attempt but the pitiful spectacle of a flagrant breach of good faith disclosed to the whole world.

Napoleon was not so blind as to mistake the feelings which his conduct would excite at Berlin, as elsewhere, but he flattered himself that he could neutralise the effect by intimidation. He hastened to take the first military measures, and ordered his generals to be on their guard. His army still occupied the whole of the south of Germany, for he had availed himself of the seizure of the mouths of the Cattaro by the Russians, to evade the evacuation both of the Austrian provinces and of the states of the new Confederation. The grand army, reinforced by numerous recruits, maintained at the expense of the foreigner, and occupying strong positions, was better inured to war, and more available than it had ever been. When these precautions were taken, he waited, with his hand on his sword, for communications from the Cabinet of Berlin.

This court had been informed, towards the middle of July, of the act which constituted the Confederation of the Rhine, under the protectorate of Napoleon. This euphemism thinly disguised the state of complete subjec-

tion in which it placed the princes whom Napoleon had constrained to enter into the league thus formed against their own country. Independently of the three sovereigns of Baden, Bavaria, and Wurtemberg, the new Confederation comprised the prince-arch-chancellor of Dalberg, the elector of Hesse-Darmstadt, the two dukes of Nassau, the grand-duke of Berg, Murat, the prince of Salm-Salm, and several others. They formed with France an alliance offensive and defensive in perpetuity, and engaged to furnish for the common defence an army of sixty-three thousand men.

The seat of the Confederation was placed at Frankfort. As for the old Germanic diet, it was treated with so little ceremony that the town of Ratisbon where its sittings were held, had been ceded to Bavaria. Our minister, Bascher, had orders to state that 'the Emperor, his master, no longer recognised the Germanic Constitution, though he recognised the sovereignty of each of the German princes, considered individually.' The immediate nobility was definitely suppressed. Napoleon, who already held in his hands all the principal passages of the Rhine, completed his system of communication with the confederate states, by extending the fortification of Mayence beyond the Rhine, and by occupying with a strong garrison the citadel of Wesel, situated on the right bank in the grand-duchy of Berg. This occupation took place at the very time that Bascher was solemnly declaring in the name of Napoleon to the diet of Ratisbon 'that the Emperor would never extend the limits of France beyond the Rhine' (August 1, 1806).

It was not, however, only the diet of Ratisbon which received a blow by this transformation,—the empire of Germany itself was, as it were, declared vacant. The emperor of Austria, who still bore this vain title, could no longer be said to have any states in Germany; France and Prussia alone could henceforth claim possessions in this country. Francis II. understood his situation, and laid down this dignity of his own accord, without waiting to be compelled to do so, although the treaty of Presburg had

formally recognised it, and had given him the right forcibly to repel this fresh act of encroachment. The act of the Confederation ostensibly injured Prussia rather less, but she still suffered seriously, since so many states, whose governments may not perhaps have been friendly to her, but whose people were attached to her by the closest ties of blood, language, interests, and affections, were about to pass for ever under foreign influence. As he could have no doubt with regard to the feelings which an establishment so contrary to her interests would excite, Napoleon endeavoured to tranquillise her by declaring at the same time that he informed her of the treaty 'that it would give him pleasure to see the states of North Germany placed under her influence, by a Confederation similar to that of the Rhine.' The compensation was very insufficient, for these states could not counter-balance those which Napoleon had just fettered to his alliance. The Cabinet of Berlin, however, eagerly accepted it, not yet suspecting that he had beforehand fully decided not to allow them to receive what he was offering. They were not long in making this discovery, together with another that was still more distressing.

Thus, the coalition that was dissolved at the price of so much blood by the victories of Ulm and Austerlitz had scarcely laid down arms when in the centre of exhausted Europe and among the people that was the best disposed towards us, a fresh coalition was about to be formed, called forth solely by a long series of bitter affronts and intolerable vexations. Never, however, did our internal situation more urgently demand a pacific policy. Napoleon, on his return from Austerlitz, was compelled to recognise this fact, and he solemnly promised that France should at length enjoy the benefits of peace. But this promise was as insincere as the reports of those too famous reverses which had obscured the brilliancy of our victories. The opening speech of the session of 1806 contained the only official mention that Napoleon ever made of the disaster of Trafalgar. Even with a deep knowledge of this faithless character and the effrontery of his impostures, we can

scarcely believe our eyes when we read the terms in which he spoke of that lamentable event. '*Storms*,' he said, '*caused us to lose a few vessels, after a combat imprudently begun.*'[1] It was on such testimony as this that he would have wished his history to be written! It was upon such evidence that France was called upon to judge of her Government, and to form an opinion of the state of her affairs! After the success of so gross a lie, how can we be astonished at the invariable credulity with which Napoleon's words were received, when he called Heaven to witness his efforts in favour of peace so dearly bought? Even then, while he was causing its failure, he speculated upon this legitimate desire, to increase his popularity as a conqueror. 'It is no longer conquests that he plans,' said Champagny for him to the Legislative Body, 'he has exhausted military glory; he no longer aspires to those bloody laurels which he has been forced to gather. To perfect the administration, to convert it into a source of lasting happiness and ever-increasing prosperity to his people, and by his acts to set them an example of pure and high morality; to merit the blessing of the present generation, and that of generations to come, such is the glory he aims at.'[2]

It was time that France began to take in earnest this lying programme, so many times promised and abandoned. Since the rupture with England the welfare and prosperity of France had received a heavy blow, and our victories, however much they may have spoiled the conquered countries, had failed to supply the immense deficit caused by the destruction of our commerce and national industry. This was, however, Napoleon's idea. He wished to accustom France to live on the spoils of Europe. 'Our finances are in a bad state,' he said to Mollien, before he set out for the campaign of Austerlitz; '*it is not here that I can restore them to order.*'[3] It was only the soldiers, in reality, who reaped the benefit of our conquests. The army was, it is

[1] *Discours d'ouverture*, March 2, 1806.
[2] *Exposé de la situation de l'Empire*, March 5, 1806.
[3] Mollien: *Mémoires d'un Ministre du Trésor.*

true, assuming such proportions that it was soon to embrace, or rather to swallow up, the whole nation. The army received the greater part of the contributions levied on the foreigner, and most of the enormous endowments which Napoleon had constituted for his generals, under the name of duchies or principalities; it was for the army also that he raised those triumphal arches of the Carrousel and the Etoile, and that column, cast with the bronze of the enemy's cannon, which were about to be erected in the public places of Paris. The army became more and more the main-spring, the motive-power, the beginning and the end of everything. Napoleon wished it to have not only a spirit distinct from that of the nation, but interests and resources independent of those of the State, with a special and exclusive administration and destination, without any connection with the other services. Such was the thought which induced him after Austerlitz to create the so much admired *Caisse Militaire*, formed out of the contributions levied upon Austria, and presided over by Mollien. An admirable invention, forsooth, which succeeded in corrupting and perverting that institution formerly so patriotic, so pure, and so disinterested, that had been named the armed nation! Our soldiers were to suffice for themselves, to form a separate body, governed by their own maxims, strangers to the passions of the rest of the people and to all influence from civilians, isolated by their pleasures as well as by their honours, and not having with the other citizens even the ties of a common interest. Still, however nearly this new military spirit may have approached to that which had formerly animated the prætorian legions, the shame and chastisement of the people of Rome, the power of French manners and civilisation was such that Napoleon never attained the ideal he dreamed of, either because he had not sufficient time to realise it, or because he was deterred by the bad effect produced by certain of these innovations, borrowed from the Rome of the Cæsars. We read in a note on the *fête* which the town of Paris was to give to the grand army on their return from Germany, '*A few bull-fights after the Spanish fashion, and some combats of*

wild beasts, would be amusements that would please soldiers.'[1] It was by such spectacles that Bonaparte doubtless proposed to give to his people, according to the expression he had dictated to Champagny, 'the lesson of a high and pure morality, and to merit the blessing of the present generation, and that of generations to come!' Tigers tearing each other to pieces in an amphitheatre before a frenzied people, this was, with the gladiators, the only custom there remained for him to borrow from the calamitous times of the Lower Empire; but here, this unbridled charlatan, who speculated so far upon the defects and prejudices of the French character, exceeded the limits of what the people of his epoch could bear. Whatever he may have done, these amusements were not to the taste of the French, and he calumniated the nation of Molière and Corneille in supposing them capable of taking pleasure in these coarse and cruel sports. Events obliged Napoleon to postpone his enterprise, which was never carried into execution, but it is too characteristic of the man to be passed over in silence. It shows in what historical regions his thoughts dwelt, and it ranks him among his true contemporaries, who had nothing in common with modern civilisation.

As a compensation for the evils and privations of every kind which resulted from the prohibition of colonial produce and the suspension of industrial affairs, the population of Paris had the spectacle of the erection of those monuments, raised rather with a view to decorate the majesty of power than to spread comfort and encourage production. The greater part of these works, at once pompous and sterile, were destined, moreover, to remain unfinished. Besides the triumphal arches which I have mentioned, the completion of the Louvre was decreed, the Pantheon was restored to religious worship, the construction of the Rue de Rivoli and of a tribunal of commerce on the site of the church of the Madeleine, and the opening of the Rue de la Paix were ordered, and the bridge of Austerlitz was inaugurated. But these buildings and other creations of a more

[1] Note from Napoleon to the Minister of the Interior, February 17, 1806.

useful character, such as the multiplication of schools of art and trades, the development of industrial exhibitions, improvements in the means of communication both by land and by water, were very insufficient palliatives for the state of distress, uneasiness, and poverty into which all the branches of our national production had fallen. Our industry, stifled by war, remained till the end of the empire in that situation which Champagny so well described by an expressive image in his report on literature: '*The belles-lettres and arts are about to take a soaring flight!*'[1] The Treasury alone rose in the midst of the general distress, thanks to the violent remedies which Bonaparte employed to put an end to the financial crisis, which had led to so many disasters among business men during the winter of 1805-1806.

The causes of this crisis were so evident that it had been announced long before by all clear-sighted men. It proceeded, first of all, from a general cause, beside which all the others were very secondary; this was the immensity of our war expenses. If we add to the enormous cost of the preparations for the expedition against England the incalculable losses occasioned by the destruction of our merchant service, by the repeated blows dealt to our commerce, by the drain upon our agriculture, which the conscription increasingly deprived of its natural supporters, we are only astonished at the facility with which France succeeded in avoiding a more complete disaster. To this predominant cause, which was the necessary result of a bad system of policy, were added the errors of a bad financial system, which preferred uncertain and dangerous expedients to a frank avowal of needs and emergencies, a plain statement of which would have sufficed to lessen Napoleon's popularity. By always reckoning on victory to cover the cost of war without increasing the taxation, Napoleon was constantly forced to meet the expenses by anticipating the receipts, and this necessity had given rise to a first expedient, which consisted in getting the obligations of the receivers-general discounted by a great financial company, who thus

[1] *Exposé de la situation de l'Empire.*

deducted a tax from a tax. This company, managed by Ouvrard, Desprez, and Vanlerberghe, was at the same time charged with the supply of provisions for the army and navy, so that they had both to advance funds to the State and to draw upon it,—a complicated situation, of which Barbé-Marbois vainly pointed out the danger to Napoleon. This company, not finding sufficient resources in Paris, was led by the force of things to extend the circle of its operations. Spain, deprived by war with England of her principal revenue, which arose from the extraction of the piastres of Mexico, had been obliged to defer the payment of her subsidies due to France; she was, moreover, a prey to scarcity of provisions. The fertile genius of Ouvrard conceived the idea of coining money with the resources of this ruined country. He presented himself to the king of Spain as the saviour of the monarchy, offered to relieve him from all his embarrassments, to pay the arrears of subsidies, and to furnish him with corn in abundance, and in return for this valuable service he demanded but one thing,—an authority to receive the piastres of Mexico, from which Spain could no longer derive any profit. He had, in fact, found a means of bringing them into the country through some English and American bankers, who were connected with the house of Hope of Amsterdam, and Pitt himself would supply the frigates for the transport of the Mexican piastres.[1] Thanks to this guarantee, the value of which cannot be questioned, the Paris company was able to continue to furnish the French Government with funds and provisions. A change immediately took place in Spain—plenty everywhere succeeded to poverty. But for the success of Ouvrard's enterprise time was indispensable, on account of the tediousness and difficulty of communications with America, and he soon saw himself threatened by a positive danger from not having taken this fact sufficiently into account in his calculations. His partners in Paris, unable to continue alone to discount the treasury bonds, applied to Barbé-Marbois, who agreed that the Bank of France should share the responsibility with them. The bank, which had

[1] *Mémoires d'Ouvrard.*

already exhausted its own resources to grant assistance to distressed commerce, and to supply Napoleon with the funds necessary for entering on his campaign,[1] quickly saw its credit shaken, and it aggravated the situation by an exaggerated issue of notes. The public, apprised of the increasing diminution of the metallic reserve, thronged the offices of the bank to get their notes cashed. As it was above all necessary to avoid an avowed bankruptcy, they were driven to devise certain formalities, which retarded the cashing of the notes, but which in reality amounted to a suspension of payment.

Such were the principal vicissitudes of a crisis, that was brought about by circumstances, and which could not, without the greatest injustice, be attributed to the bankers, who had only acted in all that they did under the control and impulse of the Government.[2] But as their reverse resulted in the ruin of many private individuals, and as there is no surer means of pleasing the vulgar than by striking persons in high positions, the object in turn of their envy or their adulation, Napoleon on his return to Paris found it much easier to take from the *United Merchants* all they possessed, and substitute himself the creditor of Spain, than to submit their transactions to a delicate and difficult arbitration.[3] With them was sacrificed the upright Barbé-Marbois, who when he accepted their expedients had only carried out Napoleon's will, that is to say, had made everything subordinate to the necessity of maintaining the service of the army. It is, moreover, worthy of notice that while he treated Ouvrard as a cheat, just as he treated Fouché as a rogue, and Masséna as a thief, Napoleon was never able to do without these men, who were certainly not remarkable for their scrupulousness. After he had abused them most violently, he always returned to them with an invincible predilection,

[1] It has been asserted that the sum advanced was fifty millions, but this has been warmly denied by several writers, especially by Bignon and Thibaudeau. The amount is, however, of slight importance; the loan is unquestionable.

[2] This fact is clearly proved by Barbé-Marbois' letters, quoted in the *Mémoires d'Ouvrard.*

[3] *Mémoire d'un Ministre du Trésor.*

because there were in his government a host of transactions that could only be confided to men of this stamp, convenient instruments, whom he could ask to do anything, and whom he dismissed and recalled without any fear that the service he demanded would be revolting to their honour, their conscience, or their pride, and without any apprehension of an embarrassing revelation, for they were the first interested in silence. With regard to Ouvrard and his partners, they were rather victims than knaves in this affair; for, as Mollien formally recognises, they had reduced by a fourth the rate of discount on the obligations of the receivers-general, and instead of getting any profit out of their great enterprise, which had in reality prevented the bankruptcy of the State, they had only met with ruin and discredit, without having done anything more than their business as speculators. To give an idea, moreover, of the justice and scruples which the Emperor displayed in the settlement of this affair, it suffices to say that he rendered not only Ouvrard, Desprez, and Vanlerberghe responsible for the misfortunes of the crisis, but about fifteen other persons, picked out of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, who were for the most part strangers to the financial world. Drawing-room heroines, inoffensive women, whose only crime was shining by their intelligence, their beauty, or the generosity of their sentiments, were exiled for having excited by their remarks the alarm of the public, and brought discredit on the bank! Among these persons were Madame Récamier, whose husband had just been completely ruined by the crisis, Mesdames de Chevreuse, de Duras, d'Aveaux, de Luynes, etc. Madame de Luynes escaped exile, thanks to the protection of Talleyrand, but only to suffer a more humiliating punishment, for she was pardoned on condition that she would become a lady of honour to the empress. It was scarcely a year since Bonaparte had instituted in the Senate his famous *Committee of Personal Liberty!* The Faubourg Saint-Germain was warned that the time for criticising the new court was passed, and that they were required, whether they liked it or not, to enter into the system. Partly by favour and partly by threats, Napoleon obtained for his

generals some of the most noble heiresses of the old aristocracy. Savary, colonel of the chosen troops of gendarmery, the hero of the midnight scenes of Vincennes, married Mademoiselle de Coigny. This is what Napoleon called effecting the fusion of the ancient and modern nobility.

In this desire, which obtained an increasingly firm hold on him, to grasp and remodel the whole of French society, there was an elementary precaution which Napoleon took care not to forget, in the midst of all his anxiety as a conqueror and the founder of an empire, and this was to prepare the rising generation for the *régime* under which they were to live, by an education conformable to the ideas that he wished to inculcate in them. He had already done a great deal in this way by the direction that he had given to public instruction; he had systematically suppressed certain branches of education, such as history and philosophy, and had replaced them by the obligatory study of military discipline, a science safe from *ideology* and better calculated to form men after his heart. He had very quickly perceived, however, that this reform in education would be very ineffectual so long as he had not reformed the teaching body itself. In order to maintain these methods unimpaired, to teach them in all their purity, it was requisite to have professors animated with one spirit, subject to the same discipline, organised in a single hierarchy; it was requisite, in a word, that unity in doctrine should be accompanied by unity in obedience. For this the statutes of the famous Society of Jesus offered Napoleon the most perfect model that he could dream of. He had, in fact, an unbounded admiration for this celebrated body, and although he proscribed them, he always envied them their organisation, which is a masterpiece of absolute power. But the Society of Jesus made him pay very dearly for these services, they worked a little for Rome, a great deal for themselves, and Napoleon would have them work for himself alone. He could not, therefore, to his great regret, come to any arrangement with the Jesuits, but he declared to his Counsellors of State [1] that they left a great gap in his system of government.

[1] Thibaudeau.

He could not, however, utilise them, 'because they had their sovereign at Rome.' He afterwards submitted to the Council of State the principles which were to serve as the basis of the plan for the reconstruction of the University. We clearly see by this that his idea was to establish a kind of lay Jesuitism, of which he was to be the head and supreme inspirer. He admitted that he could not demand vows of chastity from the members of the University, but he required that they should be forbidden to marry before a fixed time. He wanted them to be asked, like the soldiers, to make an engagement for a certain number of years, to be subject to rules of advancement, to be held strictly dependent on their superiors. On these conditions he gave up to them the monopoly of public instruction.

These views, which Napoleon had never been able to carry out fully, on account of the resistance which the manners and customs of his century offered him, were only indicated in the year 1806. The foundation of the University was postponed till the year 1810, but it was easy even then to foresee the defects of the institution. It had all the inconvenience of centralisation in an order of things to which it cannot be applied with impunity. The duty of the State is to watch over and stimulate instruction; it has no right to monopolise it. Such a monopoly, by rendering all competition impossible, suppresses all emulation, it paralyses one of the most precious incentives to human activity, and it encourages routine and indolence of mind. Absolute uniformity in method and doctrine is, too, contrary to the very essence of intellectual life, which has need above all things of liberty and of incessant movement for its free development. Nothing is more calculated to annul a professor than strict programmes, which leave no work for his mind, and by annulling the professor the talent of the pupil is stifled. The state of rigorous dependence to which the future members of the teaching body were to be subjected could not fail to lower the dignity of their noble and high profession. It too plainly revealed the intention to cast in one mould all opinion and intelligence, to confiscate

all rights and all influences to the profit of the State, that is to say, to the profit of a single man.

This selfish and sordid anxiety, which drove Napoleon to aim at nothing but his own private interest, to transform into means of governing functions and objects that were the farthest removed from politics, was still more prominent in the catechism, which he published at the same time as his plan for the University. Theology itself was about to be forced into becoming an instrumeut for the spread of Imperialism. In the month of August 1805 Napoleon had sounded the Court of Rome on his plan of a catechism, but she had excellent reasons for turning a deaf ear, and displayed great indifference in the affair. He consequently resolved to do without her, and get the work executed by his own theologians, on the model of Bossuet's Catechism, making it suitable to modern times. But he did not confine himself to this encroachment on spiritual prerogatives. He procured for the Pope the agreeable surprise of reading this profession of faith ratified by the signature of the Cardinal legate Caprara, whom Pius VII. had expressly forbidden to give his assent.[1] Caprara had a long time been unable to refuse anything to the Emperor, who had made him Archbishop of Milan, and had several times paid his debts.[2] Caprara's signature to a document of this kind was almost equal to the pontifical approbation, and we may judge of the feelings to which this publication would give rise at the Court of Rome, then on the worst possible terms with her protector, by a simple statement of the maxims contained in the *Imperial Catechism.*

'*Q.* What are more especially our duties towards our Emperor Napoleon I.?—*A.* We owe him especially love, respect, obedience, fidelity and *military service;* we ought to pay the taxes ordained for the defence of the empire and of his throne, and to offer up fervent prayers for his safety and the prosperity of his State. *Q.* Why are we bound to perform these duties towards our Emperor?—*A.* Because God by loading our Emperor with gifts, both in peace and

[1] See on this point the documents published by M. d'Haussonville.

[2] Napoleon to Prince Eugène, March 23, 1806.

in war, has established him our sovereign and His own image upon the earth. *In honouring and serving our Emperor thus we are honouring and serving God Himself.*

'*Q.* Are there not particular reasons which should attach us more closely to our Emperor Napoleon I.?—*A.* Yes, for God hath raised him up to re-establish the holy religion of our fathers, and to be its protector. He has restored and preserved public order by his great and active wisdom, he defends the State by his powerful arm; *he has become the anointed of the Lord* by the consecration which he received from the sovereign pontiff. . . . Those who fail in their duties towards our Emperor will *render themselves worthy of eternal damnation*,'[1] etc.

We feel more disgust than indignation when we think that a man dared to say all these impudent things of himself. What is still more extraordinary is that he was able to say them with impunity, and make them a subject of *religious* teaching in the age of Voltaire! With what astonishing ease this former sub-lieutenant in the artillery enrols the Pope in his police, and transforms God himself into a gendarme! His autocracy was not far, we see, from becoming a dogma. This was, in his eyes, a necessary transition, while waiting for the apotheosis. This constant and invariable method of turning everything to account for the benefit of despotism, from the honour of the soldier to the zeal of the poor village *curé* teaching morality to little children, has been admired as a conception of genius, but it has no more connection with the act of governing than the act of the savage who cuts down a tree to gather the fruit has with agriculture. One thing is lacking for the right appreciation of this system, and that is the power of judging of it by its results. If this *régime* had been brought into practice under conditions of calmness, harmony, and continuity, which are necessary for every experiment, the frightful abjection which was its inevitable consequence would have promptly led men to recognise that cunning is not genius, and that, even from the point of view of success, a system of politics which degrades men in order to govern them is

[1] Extract from the 'Catechism of the Empire.'

never a skilful one, because it destroys all the elements of duration and stability.

While Napoleon was consolidating his despotism at home by making it take deeper root in the very manners and customs of the nation, the storm of which we have seen the first signs appear in Prussia had assumed a threatening aspect. The king had eagerly accepted Napoleon's offer relative to the formation of a Confederation of the North, reckoning on the happy effect of this league to obtain the pardon of his subjects for all the humiliations that had been inflicted upon them. But in his first steps he found himself fettered in such a manner as to prevent any conclusion. While Saxony and Hesse both protested their good feeling, they either gave him reasons for delay or required as the price of their adhesion advantages which he could not accord. He quickly perceived from whence these obstacles arose. It is certain, whatever may have been said to the contrary, that Napoleon wished the Elector of Hesse-Cassel to join the Confederacy of the Rhine; but he expressly made it a condition that this prince should resign his post as marshal of Prussia;[1] it is therefore probable that, not being able to link him to his own league, he secretly did all he could to hinder him from connecting himself with that of Prussia; but he might also have foreseen that the elector would sooner or later report this attempt at intimidation to Prussia, either to justify his conduct or to gain credit. The same policy was adopted with the Hanseatic towns, which were forbidden in a still more imperious manner to take any part in the Confederation of the North. The Prussian Cabinet was soon fully apprised of this double-dealing. A month had scarcely elapsed since the Emperor had so gracefully invited his good brother to gather round Prussia the wrecks of the old Germanic empire; at the same time they learned in Berlin that Murat, the new grand-duke of Berg, talked to any one who would listen to him of his future kingdom, that Augereau encamped at Anspach with a *corps d'armée*, in the midst of a population that was wholly Prussian, publicly proposed toasts to the

[1] Napoleon to Talleyrand, May 31, 1806.

success of our coming war with Prussia, and that Napoleon, in contempt of his reiterated declarations, was fortifying Wesel and concentrating his troops there.

Affairs were at this point when a despatch from Lucchesini,[1] the Prussian minister, which was quickly confirmed by the English ambassador, informed the king of Prussia of the bargain about Hanover between France and England. Napoleon was informed by his police of Lucchesini's despatch, even before it was sent to Berlin. He immediately ordered Laforest to contradict it. Not only was he to deny the existence of a negotiation, which had lasted for months, but to swear to the king of Prussia that peace with England had only failed in consequence of our refusal to cede Hanover. On this point Napoleon wished to deceive Laforest himself, in order that he might more easily deceive the others. 'Leave him,' he wrote to Talleyrand, the 2d of August, 'in the conviction that I do not make peace with England because of Hanover.' Laforest was at the same time charged to calumniate and ruin, in the Prussian Cabinet, 'that wretch, that imbecile comedian, that false and base Lucchesini, who had the most ridiculous information.'[2] But these contradictions and calumnies could have no other effect than to increase the irritation and justifiable mistrust of a Government whose patience was at an end. The king of Prussia immediately ordered the mobilisation of his army.

Meanwhile the explosion of public opinion, pent up for so long, burst forth with extraordinary violence. In all the continental wars which he had hitherto undertaken Napoleon had only had to combat Governments more or less firmly organised; he had never been opposed by the nation. In Italy, as in Austria, he had met with a population without union, without a national spirit, connected together with the weakest of federative ties, and scarcely possessing a notion of patriotism. In these countries behind the Government there were individuals, or at the most provinces, and when once the army was destroyed he

[1] Dated August 6.
[2] Napoleon to Talleyrand, August 8, 1806.

was master of everything; in Prussia, on the contrary, behind the Government there was a nation. There was an intelligent, enlightened, and active people, perfectly homogeneous, and justly proud of the great things they had done under Frederick. Their army, unaccustomed to war, might be destroyed by a lucky stroke, but there remained a resource in the country in these laborious and resisting masses, from which fresh legions would be formed. Napoleon was unconsciously to meet in them with the same force which had been the cause of the superiority of France over Europe.

A deluge of patriotic pamphlets very soon inundated Germany. All her southern provinces were still treated as a conquered country and occupied by our troops, which Napoleon found it now convenient to maintain at the expense of the foreigner. Supposing that the pretext of the occupation of the mouths of the Cattaro by the Russians could be fairly invoked against Austria in justification of such treatment, this reason was in no way applicable to the other German states, which had also to suffer from the same scourge. The complaints of Prussia found an echo throughout the whole of Germany, owing to the sufferings of the lower orders, and the sincere indignation of the higher classes, who had just seen themselves divided and distributed like flocks in the last settlement of German affairs. In spite of this increasing agitation, such were the weakness and indecision of the king that war might still have been avoided with a little moderation. Laforest, enlightened by the outburst of public opinion, abandoned by D'Haugwitz and even Lombard, who had yielded to the current, recommended a more prudent course of conduct to his Government, but Napoleon rejected this advice with his usual arrogance, and his policy took a still more aggressive and aggravating turn. 'Laforest's letter,' he wrote to Talleyrand, August the 22d, 'appears to me very foolish. His extreme fear excites pity . . . tell him he is to be silent, to watch events, and to inform me of everything that transpires . . . to be extremely reserved . . . if they speak to him of the Confederation of the North, he is to say *that he has no instructions;* if any-

thing is proposed for the Hanseatic towns, he is to declare *that I will suffer no change to be made in their present state* . . . if Lucchesini speaks to you of Saxony and Hesse, you will reply that *you do not know my intentions.*' He indicated pretty clearly what these intentions were by refusing to make them known. At the same time that he sent these deplorable instructions to Laforest, he gave Germany a mournful and threatening warning by the murder of Palm (August 26th).

Palm was a bookseller in Nuremberg, a free town recently ceded to Bavaria, and over which we could not raise any legitimate claim, although it was momentarily occupied by our troops. Palm, like all other booksellers, had committed the crime, not of publishing, but of selling and distributing the pamphlets written in favour of the liberty of his country. Among these pamphlets was the eloquent publication of Gentz, entitled 'The Deep Degradation of Germany,' a work of which the fervour and vehemence had powerfully contributed to rouse the national spirit. Napoleon did not know two ways of refuting writings: not being able to suppress the author, he laid the blame on the booksellers. In this affair he employed a remedy which, in all his letters, he had recommended to his brother Joseph, as an infallible means of quieting the Neapolitans. This remedy, which, like the burden of a song, perpetually recurs in his fraternal effusions, and which Napoleon considered as applicable to everything and everywhere, was expressed in a single word, which was in his opinion the summary of all political wisdom —Shoot! On the 5th of August he sent Berthier this brief order:—'My cousin, you have, I imagine, arrested the booksellers of Augsburg and Nuremberg. *I intend them to be brought before a military commission and shot within twenty-four hours.* It is not an ordinary crime, that of spreading libels in places occupied by the French armies, in order to excite the inhabitants against them. The sentence is to state that wherever there is an army, the duty of the commander being to watch over its safety, such and such persons, *convicted of having attempted to rouse the inhabitants of Suabia against the French army*, are condemned to death.'

Everything was thus regulated beforehand, the guilt, the punishment, and the conviction, and seven colonels in the French army were found willing to accept this ignominious office of judges *per procuration.* But they might have replied what Hullin wrote in reference to the Duc d'Enghien : —'We were obliged to condemn, under pain of being condemned ourselves.' Palm, arrested in Nuremberg, was handed over to the military commission, who obeyed their orders and condemned him to death, together with three other booksellers, whom they did not succeed in apprehending. They rightly thought that it was useless to give him a counsel for his defence, but they altered their opinion on this point when they drew up the sentence, and in the judgment they added a lie to their atrocious deed, by solemnly testifying that this formality had been observed. Palm met death with a courage and simplicity that moved even his executioners. He was very soon celebrated as a martyr by the patriotic songs which resounded throughout Germany.

The murder of this innocent man caused a shudder among all the German population. Shooting might have been an efficacious means in the half-savage provinces of Naples, but in the heart of civilised Europe, and in the midst of a people that had not yet been fashioned to servitude, the effect produced was far less that of fear than of anger and indignation. Governments attach little importance to the life of an obscure individual, especially when he is struck in the name of a pretended interest of the State, and the Court of Berlin remained very indifferent to the death of Palm. Still the event had some influence on their determinations, for they could not henceforth avoid the counter-shock of public emotion ; and Napoleon, instead of being disposed to make the slightest concession, in order to render conciliation easier, became day by day more stubborn, more haughty, and more absolute in his requirements.

Alleging as a pretext the refusal of Russia to ratify the treaty concluded with D'Oubril, he would no longer allow Prussia to speak of the Confederation of the North till she

had disarmed.[1] He even went beyond this demand, and prescribed to his minister in Saxony secretly to press the elector to declare himself an *independent being*.[2] With such injunctions it was impossible to dream of re-establishing a good understanding between the two Powers; and when M. de Knobelsdorff, Lucchesini's successor, had made known by his note of October 1st the three conditions which formed the ultimatum of the Cabinet of Berlin, viz. the evacuation of Germany by our army, the restitution of Wesel, and a promise not to put any obstacle to the Confederation of the North, this programme revealed so clearly the incalculable difference between the views of the two Governments, that war was virtually declared. Napoleon had already set out for Mayence a week before.

The Cabinet of Berlin had committed several grave errors in the course of this long negotiation, but they were the errors of weakness, and not those of deliberate perversity. The first of these errors consisted in not declaring war on us the very day after the violation of the treaty of Anspach, for we had even then given her twenty reasons for doing so: by the attack on Ettenheim, by the seizure of the port of Cuxhaven, by the arrest of Rumbold, by the violation of the territory of Hesse-Cassel, which took place a few days before that of Anspach, and, in short, by the whole of our European policy in which she had a right to interfere. When she had missed this opportunity, through her irresolution, the Court of Berlin committed a second error—that of accepting Hanover out of terror of Napoleon.

But instead of contenting himself with this dangerous victory, and giving at least a feeling of security to those whom he had so cruelly humiliated, Napoleon did not rest till he had worn out their complaisance and exasperated them to frenzy. He had no sooner ceded Hanover to Prussia than he offered it to England: at the same time he offered to the king of Naples the Hanseatic towns, for whose independence he had displayed so much zeal when it was proposed to unite them to the Confederation of the

[1] Napoleon to Laforest, September 12, 1806.
[2] Note for a despatch to Durand, September 12.

North. He dismembered Germany for the benefit of France before the eyes of the dismayed king of Prussia, presenting him compensations with one hand which he drew from him with the other. He occupied the strong places beyond the Rhine, in spite of his reiterated promises; he caused German citizens to be shot in neutral countries, where his troops had established themselves, against all right. And what had his conduct been during this time towards Europe and his allies? He had deceived England by promising her that he would not claim Sicily; he had deceived Spain by offering her the Balearic Islands without her knowledge; he had deceived Holland by ceding her colonies to the English negotiators, after having sworn that he would keep them for her; he had deceived Austria by trafficking with Ragusa, which was one of her dependencies, by destroying the treaty of Presburg, which formally recognised the empire of Germany and the ancient Germanic Confederation (Art. VII); he had deceived Russia by obtaining from D'Oubril a treaty concluded under the solemn promise that the Emperor would not publish the act of the Confederation of the Rhine. But these machinations were conducted so unskilfully that the fraud betrayed itself. He who had lied to everybody, found everybody united against him. His imposture was unmasked, and a few months after Austerlitz the Continent was armed to attack us afresh. The task accomplished by our soldiers had to be begun over again.

Instead, however, of being frightened at this prospect, he exulted and rejoiced over it. 'I have nearly a hundred and fifty thousand men in Germany,' he wrote to Joseph, '*and with them I can conquer Vienna, Berlin, and St. Petersburg!*' This was but too true; but the possibility of such a conquest deceived him with regard to its stability. His army could work a great many miracles: they might gain a hundred battles, but they could neither remodel modern civilisation nor change the spirit of nations.

When we think of the marvellous instrument that he had in his hands, and the unworthy use to which he put it for so long a time with impunity, imagination turns to those

magic powers which play so important a part in Eastern tales. So long as the hero is in possession of the talisman, everything he attempts succeeds, even that which is most improbable. The principles which guide other men are set at nought by him. Unheard-of prodigies are performed by his unconscionable hand. He knows neither good nor evil; he laughs at what is impossible. He makes sport of all that is just and sacred. For him madness becomes genius, want of forethought skill, iniquity justice, and the more he treads under foot all the rules of wisdom, of right, and of common sense, the more his success increases, extends, and grows brilliant. Even the laws of nature seem to be upset. Men contemplate with superstitious awe the sinister splendour of the meteor. They are ready to deify the privileged and invulnerable mortal whose astounding fortune no folly and no crime can mar. One day the talisman is lost or broken, and suddenly the god has disappeared. Nothing remains but a poor fool; and the bewildering mind, hesitating between horror and pity, asks whether this elect of destiny was not rather its victim. Such is the history of Napoleon and the grand army.

CHAPTER V

JENA—THE DECREE OF BERLIN

However deep, sincere, and passionate may have been the national movement which had just drawn Prussia into war, after the deadly affronts to which Napoleon had subjected her, the military situation of this Power, as well as the formidable activity of her enemy, required measures of extreme prudence, which were unfortunately incompatible with the generous outbursts of patriotism. Prussia, a country of endless plains, open on all sides to invasion, and composed of strips of territory without compactness, possessed scarcely any of those great natural barriers under shelter of which a nation can intrench themselves, as behind a rampart, and which gives them time to organise a national insurrection when their armies have been destroyed. The Elbe, the only river that offered them a strong line of defence, could only be chosen as a barrier on condition of first abandoning nearly half the kingdom. And to increase their misfortune, the French army was at their doors. Napoleon had not even to cross the distance which in nearly every war between two countries separates the combatants. He had already a hundred and fifty thousand men upon the Prussian frontier in Franconia, so that this admirable popular rising, which would have given Prussia a hundred thousand additional soldiers, could not be turned to account for want of time. It became even an embarrassment and a danger, for it drove her to commit acts of irreparable imprudence, and to take up an offensive attitude that was inconsistent with her inferior forces. A scarcely less deplorable consequence of the weakness and indecision

of the king was, that the effective force of the army was smaller at the opening of hostilities than it had been some time before. After the treaty of the 15th of February, the king of Prussia, in order to give Napoleon a pledge of his pacific intentions, had disbanded a large portion of his army; and though he had fully resolved to call these troops back to service as early as the middle of August, he had not yet succeeded in completely reorganising them. He could not, according to the surest calculations,[1] bring into the field against Napoleon more than twenty thousand men at the very most. This army—intelligent, brave, and well disciplined, and animated with the best sentiments—had one defect that was far graver than its numerical inferiority. It was that of never having been exercised in war. The Prussian troops may be said never to have fought since the Seven Years' War, for the short campaign against us, in which they had served at the commencement of the Revolution, had scarcely been more than a military promenade. The art of war is only learned in battles. If this maxim does not always apply to great captains whose genius is innate, and depends more on inspiration than experience, it is strictly true with regard to the common soldiers.

This inexperienced army was commanded by generals who had neither youth nor ardour. The duke of Brunswick was seventy-one; Marshal Mœllendorf and General Kalkreuth were seventy. Blücher himself, who was a young man in impetuosity, as his contemporary, the prince of Hohenlohe, was in presumptuousness, was at this time over sixty.[2] The former companions of the great Frederick were, for the

[1] Some of our historians have raised this number to 185,000 men, including, it is true, the Prussian garrisons. At that rate Napoleon's army must be estimated at 500,000 men. This is one of the common fictions of what is called national history. According to the official reports, published by the duke of Brunswick, the total effective of the Prussian forces, including the Saxon contingent, did not exceed 117,000 men.

[2] I do not know on what grounds M. Thiers represents the prince of Hohenlohe, who was born in 1746, as one of the principal young men.

most part, as despondent as their soldiers were confident. Celebrated from youth by their glorious successes, passionately devoted to a country which they had, as it were, made with their heroic hands, but imbued with strategical ideas, which, from ceasing to be modified by circumstances, had gradually become stagnant—paralysed, moreover, by age and long repose,—they were unable to share the illusions of those around them, though they dared not dispel them, for fear of damping the courage of the soldiers. The Prussian army thus presented the strange spectacle of daring soldiers, commanded by worn-out officers.

At the head of the young men who rushed to avenge the national honour was Prince Louis of Prussia, the friend of Madame de Staël and the nephew of the great Frederick, an ardent and chivalrous youth, already adored for his noble qualities. He had contributed more than any other to rouse the public spirit, and heroically gave his life to the cause that he had embraced. By his side was Prince Henry, and that queen, so beautiful and so touching, whom Napoleon has immortalised by his unmanly insults. Following the example of Maria Theresa, Queen Louisa had wished to stimulate by her exhortations the ardour and courage of the soldiers; but the chief object of her presence at the head-quarters was to sustain the irresolute mind of the king, whose relapse into weakness and repentance was constantly feared. Almost the whole of the court had followed her into the camp, in which were seen publicists, like Baron de Gentz, and even unfortunate partisans of our alliance, like D'Haugwitz and Lombard, who had been cured somewhat late of their illusions. Inoffensive writers, professors like Arndt, and poets like Kotzebue, were calling the nation to arms. The philosopher Fichte, the warm defender of the French Revolution, who had become the not less resolute enemy of the new Cæsarism, in his *Addresses to the German Nation*, had demanded as a favour to be enrolled in the Prussian army; but it was not till later that the utility of such a co-operation was understood. The presence of these women, courtiers, writers, and statesmen indicated plainly enough that they identified themselves with the army, that

they were ready to share its fate, and that they regarded it as the personification of the country itself. But in spite of the spontaneity and extent of this burst of patriotism, either because the magnitude of the danger was not yet known, or because the time had not been sufficient to organise and generalise the movement, these first forces were principally furnished by the noble and military classes, who, from having been long trained for the work, were naturally the first ready for the combat.

It was only later that the necessity was felt of enrolling the whole nation. At first, this courageous and devoted population, who asked to share the perils of their defenders, were condemned to remain mere spectators of the combat. This is the explanation of the misfortunes of Prussia in 1806, and of the unheard-of rapidity of our triumphs. The nature of her territory, accessible and vulnerable on so many points, as well as the immense resources which Napoleon had at his disposal, required from the beginning that this Power more than any other should be an armed nation, and she had this great advantage over our other enemies of the Continent, that it was possible and even easy for her to become so. But it was only out of the depth of her misfortunes and despairing patriotism that the inspiration burst forth which has given Prussia her strong and grand originality among modern nations. For the moment, Prussia still believed that her old military institutions were a sufficient defence, and she was about to pay dearly for the illusion.

The Prussian army had been divided into two corps. The first, composed of about seventy thousand men, and commanded by the duke of Brunswick, had removed from Magdeburg to Weimar and Erfurt; the second, under the orders of the prince of Hohenlohe, had entered Saxony, and after having thrice rallied a corps of twenty thousand Saxons, had fallen back upon the Saale towards the entrance of the passes which lead from Saxony into Franconia. This position—far too advanced, considering the numerical weakness of the Prussian army, and the position which we ourselves occupied in Franconia—had been adopted principally

in the hope of drawing in the Elector of Hesse-Cassel, who had from fifteen to twenty thousand men at his disposal, and who was endeavouring to maintain his neutrality between two powerful neighbours. In order to put an end more quickly to the hesitations of this prince, the duke of Brunswick had extended his right as far as Eisenach, at the extremity of the forest of Thuringia, which covered the front of his army for the length of twenty leagues. This fault recalls the one which Mack had committed the preceding year by rashly advancing into Bavaria. Like the Austrian generals at that time, the Prussians had now only one line of conduct to follow against such an adversary: this was to choose good defensive positions, and intrench themselves in them successively in such a manner as to give the Russian army time to come to their succour. If they were strongly desirous not to surrender to Napoleon the entrance into Saxony without a combat, they had a first barrier to oppose to him in the Upper Saale;[1] they had a second and much stronger one in the Elbe; and at the last extremity they could take refuge beyond the Oder—by abandoning the monarchy, it is true, but by saving the army, which in its turn could save everything. Such were the wise resolutions which Dumourier was, at that very time, urging upon the Court of Berlin, with the authority of his old military experience, backed by the memorable lessons of the previous year. But instead of falling back upon the right bank of the Saale, the army of Brunswick remained encamped between this river and the forest of Thuringia, in an almost open position, and without even taking the precaution to guard the numerous passes by which it could be approached.

Napoleon was quite ready to profit by these faults, but he wished that the first blow, which he was about to deal to the continental powers through Prussia, should be more brilliant and more terrible than any of those that he had hitherto struck, in order to destroy at once all idea of resistance. Never were more immense efforts directed against a state, which was after all only a state of the second

[1] Jomini.

order; never did a struggle begin on more unequal conditions. His troops, destined to operate immediately against Brunswick's army, rose, by his own admission, to nearly two hundred thousand men, and at the lowest calculation to a hundred and ninety thousand.[1] 'I shall have two hundred thousand men upon the field of battle,' he wrote to Louis the 30th of September. 'We shall march upon Dresden in a square battalion of two hundred thousand men,' he wrote to Soult the 5th of October, and he adds, '*with this immense superiority in numbers I can attack the enemy everywhere with double forces.*' These admissions deserve more confidence than the ordinary lies of the bulletins, in which, the day after the battle, the proportion of the two armies was invariably reversed.

The troops which were to operate directly under his orders were in some sort only the superfluous forces of that immense army which from all points of the empire was ready, if needed, to march and replace them. Napoleon left behind him, to insure his communications, the fifty thousand men of the Confederation of the Rhine. At Wesel he had a corps of thirty thousand men, under the orders of King Louis. This prince was to announce, in the gazettes, that his troops, amounting to eighty thousand soldiers, were going to invade Westphalia. Twenty thousand men guarded Mayence, under the command of Mortier. To these forces were added, upon our frontiers of the north and east, twelve thousand national guards mobilised, and thirty thousand conscripts. Brune remained behind, charged with the defence of our coasts. Marmont, with twenty thousand men, concentrated at Zara in Illyria; Eugène, the vice-king of Italy, with forty thousand men, resting on Venice and Palmanova, and, with the possibility of being reinforced by thirty thousand men, borrowed from King Joseph, guaranteed the tranquillity of Austria. The Austrians, moreover, grieved very little over the misfortunes which they saw would befall Prussia. That vast circle of

[1] The estimate given by Fezensac, in his *Souvenirs Militaires*, appears to us to approach most nearly to the truth. On other points his statements with regard to this campaign are far less correct.

defence which already embarrassed nearly the half of Europe was strengthened by a line of impregnable fortifications extending from Antwerp to Braunau—that is to say, from the Ocean to the Inn. In his anxiety to concentrate against Prussia all the resources and all the means of which he could dispose, Napoleon had already thought of turning to account the illusions of the Polish patriots. He organised, under the orders of General Zayonchek, a Polish legion, destined to operate later in the duchy of Warsaw.[1] Not finding what he termed the return of the conscription in France sufficient, he made an appeal for volunteers, as if this word could have any meaning under a *régime* in which no will existed beyond his own. A corps of volunteers was organised under the name of *gendarmes d'ordonnance* of the Emperor. As he could not appeal to love of liberty, nor even to a sentiment of patriotism, for the maintenance of a war which had been undertaken only from ambition, he appealed to family pride. This corps was to be composed of young men of wealth, who were able to equip themselves, and who would be supported by their parents. Their very title seemed to promise them that they would have personal intercourse with the Emperor—that is to say, precious opportunities of distinguishing themselves before his eyes. It was, in short, an inestimable favour to be allowed to enter this corps, and the minister of the interior had been obliged to make use of entreaties in order to obtain so marked a distinction for these young men. 'His Majesty's army,' he said, 'is so large that he has only acceded to my demand upon my earnest entreaty.' It is unnecessary to add that this circular was drawn up by Napoleon himself. Notwithstanding the irresistible attraction of this promise, the corps of the *gendarmes d'ordonnance* obtained but little honour in this campaign. The zeal of the sons of family was afterwards stimulated by invitations that were more efficacious, but which deprived them of all possible claim to the name of volunteers.

In spite of these immense preparations, which would have been sufficient to crush an enemy far more powerful

[1] Napoleon to General Dejean, September 20.

than Prussia, Napoleon seemed to think this time that he had never done enough to insure victory. It might be said that it was impossible for him to satisfy himself. He hurried things on, he passed measure after measure, he took additional precautions, and he increased his armaments, displaying a sort of frantic activity and furious ardour in an effort which he evidently thought was destined to decide for ever the empire of the world. When once Prussia was annihilated, what had he henceforward to fear?

Russia alone remained upon the field of battle; we could with a word send her back to her deserts, and the rest of the Continent would no longer offer him anything more than trembling and submissive Powers. The campaign that was opening was therefore the principal event of his life, the decisive crisis of his destiny. Under the influence of this fixed idea which had taken possession of him, Napoleon, who was always so completely governed by the circumstances of the hour as often to lose all remembrance of the past, went so far as to flatter himself that he could induce Austria to pronounce against Prussia. It was only on the eve of the opening of the campaign that the wise counsels of Talleyrand recurred to his mind.

He then perceived for the first time that he had not a single ally in Europe upon whom he could count. He remembered that the destinies of war are changeable—that a single lost battle might bring to the ground this gigantic scaffolding, which did not after all rest either upon principles, or interests, or passions, and which had no other support than his military genius. Under the influence of these wise reflections, which came rather late, he ventured to propose to Austria, mutilated,—to Austria still bleeding from all the wounds which he had inflicted,—to join him in crushing the only army that offered her any chance of regaining a portion of what she had lost. Pretending not yet to believe in the war, though his army was already encamped at Würzburg, he wrote to La Rochefoucault, his ambassador at Vienna:—

'I am resolved no longer to be the ally of a Power *so inconstant and contemptible* as Prussia. I shall keep peace

with her, because *I have no right to shed the blood of my people for vain pretexts.* Still, the need I have of turning attention to my navy renders it necessary for me to have an alliance upon the Continent. . . . Of the three Powers, Russia, Prussia, and Austria, *I must have one for an ally.* Under no circumstances *can I trust Prussia;* there remain therefore only Russia and Austria. . . . I have a great esteem for the emperor of Austria—I believe him to be constant and true to his word; you should explain this to him, without however showing an unbecoming eagerness.'[1]

It is almost as difficult to believe that this overture was sincere, as to think that it was a mere comedy. Equally offensive and cynical on either hypothesis, it does little credit to the political tact of him who conceived it, for it could only produce a bad effect.

Meanwhile the French army accomplished its movement of concentration in Upper Franconia, upon the skirts of that same forest of Thuringia of which the Prussian army occupied the opposite side. To effect this movement, we had only to cross the few leagues which separate Suabia and the Upper Palatinate from Würzburg and Bamberg. Our army developed itself from Kronach to Hildburghausen, threatening all the passes in front of the duke of Brunswick's troops. It was exactly in this situation that Napoleon sought the elements of his plan of campaign, and there is not even any ground for discussing the fantastical hypothesis of a march into Westphalia, for the pleasure apparently of going two hundred leagues out of his way, and giving himself an obstacle in the Weser. Napoleon was only separated from the Prussian army by five or six leagues. He could, as he chose, either attack it on the right by Eisenach and Gotha, or on the left by Hof and Schleitz. In the first case he drove back the Prussians upon their natural line of retreat—that is to say, Saxony and the Elbe; in the second he cut them off from both, and that with such superior forces that this operation, always very critical when the numbers are equal, presented scarcely any danger to him, even under the most disadvantageous suppositions,

[1] Napoleon to M. de la Rochefoucault, October 3, 1806.

while for the Prussians it was equivalent to total destruction. His genius naturally inclined him to these adventurous operations. To turn the enemy, to seize his communications, and begin by demoralisation a defeat that he was soon to complete by his arms—this was his favourite manœuvre, the one to which he owed his most brilliant success, the one that was one day to be his ruin; and how can we admit that he was going to change these tactics at the very moment that they promised him more decisive advantages than ever?

Informed of the movements of the French army, the duke of Brunswick concentrated his army in the neighbourhood of Weimar. He recalled the corps of Hohenlohe, but he only left the advanced guard at the issues of the forest of Thuringia, forgetting the magnificent demonstration by which Moreau had so clearly proved at Hohenlinden the danger of an operation similar to that which we were going to undertake. Our army, which had been obliged to divide in order to cross the defiles, was able to enter Saxony with impunity at three different points, over an extent of nearly fifteen leagues, by Hof, by Saalburg, and by Grafenthal. It is very probable that if Brunswick had concentrated all his efforts upon one of these isolated corps, he would have gravely compromised the success of our subsequent operations. While Napoleon was executing this important passage, Brunswick remained as if he were asleep at Weimar, and in such a state of inaction that it is useless to examine the different plans of campaign that have been attributed to him, since he did not adopt any of them.

Our troops immediately spread themselves upon both banks of the Saale, having their greatest force upon the right, in such a manner as to descend the river parallel with the Prussian army. A first engagement took place on the 8th of October at Saalburg, between a detachment of the enemy and Murat's cavalry. The next day Bernadotte drove General Tauenzien back to Schleitz. On the 10th of October, Lannes, whose *corps d'armée* formed our left with that of Augereau, met at Saalfeld the advance-guard of Hohenlohe, commanded by Prince Louis of Prussia.

This time the two adversaries were worthy of each other, but the positions were far from being equal.

Outnumbered from the commencement of the action, the Prussian troops were unable to hold their ground against Lannes' impetuosity, and after a short resistance fell back upon all points. The prince, in despair at this repulse, of which he foresaw the unfortunate effect at the outset of a campaign, stopped the rout and led back his soldiers. He made several charges at the head of his cavalry, and for an instant succeeded in renewing the combat. In one of these charges, carried into the thick of the fight, he was perceived engaged hand in hand with our horsemen, struggling to the last like a man who had resolved not to survive defeat, and refusing to surrender after having seen all his companions fall around him. A hussar, to whose summons he replied by a thrust with his sword, ran his sabre through his body. Thus expired, on the very threshold of his invaded country, this generous young man, who seemed reserved for higher destinies. If he was not permitted to fulfil them, he did not at any rate see his land profaned by the foreigner. He escaped the spectacle of the countless humiliations which an implacable conqueror was about to inflict on his country and his house.

Napoleon was at Schleitz. From thence he removed his head-quarters to Auma, and then to Gera (October 12), about as high up as Jena. In the neighbourhood of this town were established the advanced posts of Brunswick's army, which was still encamped between Erfurt and Weimar, a few leagues farther on. Our forward march upon the right bank of the Saale, where Murat's cavalry had already reached Naumburg, at length enlightened the old marshal with regard to Napoleon's intentions. He saw that his enemy was about to separate him from Saxony, forestall him upon the Elbe—perhaps even at Magdeburg, the most essential point of his line of retreat. He immediately resolved to decamp with the bulk of his army, and to advance along the banks of the Saale as far as Magdeburg, leaving behind him the *corps d'armée* of Hohenlohe and that of General Rüchel, to rally several detachments which

had remained behind. This was dividing his forces at the moment that he would have to fight, and when it was more requisite than ever to unite them.

In order to effect this movement with safety, it was of the highest importance for him to keep in his possession the passages of the Saale up to the point where it falls into the Elbe, and particularly at Naumburg, a town placed upon his line of retreat, by which he could debouch upon his flank and stop his march. The duke of Brunswick understood this necessity, and gave orders to one of his lieutenants to occupy Naumburg; but all was done so slowly and so carelessly that the corps of Davoust and Bernadotte had had ample time to seize this position, and establish themselves upon the left bank of the Saale before their opponents thought of forestalling them there. The prince of Hohenlohe, who was far more menaced than Brunswick, since, with the weakest portion of the Prussian army, he confronted the strongest portion of the French army commanded by Napoleon, displayed a still more inconceivable negligence in guarding the passage of the Saale at Jena. While Brunswick was stealing away in the direction of Naumburg, Hohenlohe had replaced him round Weimar. He occupied with strong forces the road that leads from Weimar to Jena, but he had not even a corps of observation in this last town, so that Lannes was able to establish himself on the heights which overlook it, in sight of the Prussian outposts, which extended from Cospoda to Closewitz.

Such was the situation of the two armies on the morning of the 13th of October. Brunswick was marching with the king and about sixty thousand men towards Naumburg and the pass of Kösen, where he was about to encounter Davoust's corps. Hohenlohe, intrenched on the road from Jena to Weimar with about forty thousand men,[1] was preparing to follow him, as soon as he had rallied the twenty

[1] This was the estimate of Napoleon himself when he arrived at Jena. 'The enemy is with *forty thousand men* between Weimar and Jena,' he wrote to Ney, the day before the battle. This number was increased to 80,000 in his fifth bulletin.

thousand men of General Rüchel, who was still behind. He did not in the least expect to be attacked by Jena, seeing the difficulties that a large army would find in debouching by the heights of Landgrafenberg, which crown the town. He believed that Lannes' corps was established there to reconnoitre, and not as a column of attack. Napoleon had, on the contrary, resolved to remove the main body of his army to this point. He did not thoroughly know, moreover, the real position of the Prussian army. He supposed that he had still before him almost all Brunswick's forces, and consequently imagined that he had completely turned them. 'The Prussian army is caught in a trap—it is turned,' he wrote the same morning in his bulletin.[1] He said the same thing in all the letters that he had written since the previous night. This mistake made him commit a fault that nearly cost him dear. Persuaded that the passes of Kösen and Naumburg could only be attacked by an army that he would have already put to the rout, he considered that the corps of Davoust would be sufficient to hold this position, and recalled that of Bernadotte, as well as Murat's cavalry, which had taken the same direction, to Dornburg, the nearest point to Jena, where he proposed making use of them in the battle which he wished to deliver himself.[2]

Napoleon employed the whole of the evening, and a part of the night of the thirteenth of October, in making his army climb the heights of Landgrafenberg, and in assigning to his different corps their position in the battle. Augereau was placed on the left on the Weimar road; Soult at Lobstœdt with the right; in the centre, upon the

[1] Fourth bulletin, October 13.

[2] The order which has since been so much contested is as formal as possible. '*Remove as quickly as possible with Bernadotte's corps to Dornburg.*' Napoleon to Murat, October 13th. A letter, sent the evening of the same day to Davoust by Berthier, added: 'If the prince of Ponte-Corvo is in your neighbourhood, *you might march together*, but the Emperor *hopes* that he will already have marched, with the cavalry of the grand duke of Berg, for *Dornburg*.' Bernadotte was therefore allowed to choose, but a preference was given to this last movement.

plateau, were Lannes, Ney, and Murat, who had come in all haste from Dornburg, with his light cavalry, and Napoleon himself with his guard. The whole of these forces formed a total of more than double the army of Prince Hohenlohe. On the morning of the 14th of October, through a thick fog, Lannes was sent to clear the way, in order to allow our army to deploy. He attacked the Prussian outposts with a vigour that very quickly made them understand that they had before them something more than an isolated corps. They held their ground for a time in the villages of Closewitz and Cospoda, but it was not long before they were driven out, and Hohenlohe only learned by this preliminary engagement that he was going to have the whole of Napoleon's army upon his hands. He immediately made his troops prepare for defence, hastened to recall General Rüchel, who was still at Weimar, and then rushed forward to recover a position of which he was only beginning to understand the importance.

At ten o'clock in the morning the battle recommenced. This time it was begun by Marshal Ney, who, carried away by his impatience, placed himself with only three thousand men in the very centre of the enemy's line. Assailed by masses of cavalry, the marshal had formed his battalions into a square, and defended himself for nearly an hour in this perilous situation, till Lannes came to disengage him. At the same time, Augereau was attacking the Prussians by Iserstedt, after having turned the Schnecke, a position which they believed to be inaccessible; and Soult, upon our right, was exchanging some brisk shots with their infantry, which was intrenched in a little wood situated behind the village of Closewitz. When Napoleon saw that his two wings were gaining ground upon the Prussian troops, he made the guard and all the reserves advance simultaneously. The sudden irruption of such an overwhelming mass broke Hohenlohe's centre in an instant. The enemy's line gave way, and at the moment that it fell back, Murat, availing himself of the opportunity, bore down upon it with all his cavalry. 'In the twinkling of an eye,' said Napoleon, 'the retreat of the Prussians was changed

into a complete rout.' The fugitives, hotly pursued, fled in the direction of Weimar. It was just at this hour that General Rüchel arrived upon the field of battle, with his twenty thousand men, wearied by forced marches. He intrepidly placed himself in front of the flying troops, but he was almost immediately overthrown by the irresistible shock of a victorious army; and the crowd, stopped for an instant, again fled towards Weimar, where our cavalry arrived pell-mell with the fugitives, making prisoners by thousands.

While Napoleon was gaining this easy victory over Hohenlohe, Davoust was fighting alone, five or six leagues off, against the largest portion of the Prussian army, commanded by the king in person, and by the duke of Brunswick. The marshal had taken advantage of the night to commence the occupation of the pass of Kösen, which the Prussians were to cross in order to reach Naumburg. On the morning of the 14th, presuming that he would have to deal with an enemy superior in number, without however yet knowing the whole extent of the danger, he had vainly endeavoured to retain Bernadotte, whose positive orders, though they were open to several interpretations, were that he should occupy Dornburg. Bernadotte, who was moreover ignorant of the real state of affairs, kept to the letter of his instructions, and whatever may be said in blame or praise of his determination, it is certain that he acted conformably to the spirit that Napoleon had developed in his army. When a general lays claims to infallibility, he alone is responsible for events, and it is unjust to complain of faults which have been committed in execution of his orders.

On the 14th of October, at the same hour in which the battle was beginning at Jena, General Schmettau, whom Brunswick had sent forward somewhat tardily to take possession of the pass of Kösen, came into collision in the fog with Gudin's division, which was guarding the entrance to it opposite Hassenhausen. Blücher commanded the cavalry of Schmettau. He charged that of Gudin with impetuosity, and made it give way; but he endeavoured in

vain to break through our infantry, which was formed into squares, and protected by batteries that swept the road. The two corps of the prince of Orange and of Wartensleben having debouched from Auerstädt to support Schmettau, Gudin's division found themselves for an instant assailed by triple forces, and outflanked on all sides. But, protected by the skilfulness of their dispositions, and favoured by a thick fog which caused great confusion in the manœuvres, they heroically defended the post which had been confided to them, and gave the other divisions of Davoust time to come to their succour. Friant's division appeared the first, and by a vigorous movement disengaged Gudin's right, by driving the cavalry back upon Eckartsberge, which threatened to break our ranks. Our left remained in peril. The duke of Brunswick, alarmed at the unexpected resistance which he encountered, and deploring the fault that he had committed in allowing himself to be forestalled at Kösen, resolved to open a passage at any price. He united his two divisions of Orange and Wartensleben, harangued them, placed himself at their head to lead them to the fire. He was received by a shower of balls and shot. His troops bravely sustained this trial, but they had not mettle enough to take our positions. While trying to draw them on, the old marshal was mortally wounded. Close to him fell Schmettau, and an instant after, Mœllendorf himself, along with some of his bravest officers, who also met their death. Gudin's division, however, exhausted with fatigue, was about to succumb, when Morand's division arrived, and renewed the combat with fresh troops. Prince William, with his cavalry, and the king in person, with Wartensleben's division, attacked it by turns without success. The prince was wounded, and the king had two horses killed under him. Our squares remained firm under this avalanche of cavalry. Received by a murderous fire, the Prussians were driven back in disorder, and the ground was strewed with their corpses. Then, taking advantage of the indecision and dismay which these repeated checks had spread in the enemy's army, Davoust by a rapid movement rushed

forward with his divisions, seized the heights of Eckartsberge and crowned them with artillery.

This was one of the most critical moments for the Prussian army. It was in fact exactly the same hour at which the fearful rout of Jena was effected, and it was more than ever important for them to take the defiles of Kösen and Naumburg. Although they had hitherto failed in the attempt, an attack *en masse*, undertaken with all their united forces, would probably have succeeded, for their efforts had been very unconnected, and two of their divisions had not yet fought. But the king had no suspicion even of Hohenlohe's disaster. He had sustained the severest losses, and he had seen his first generals and his best officers fall. He resolved to rejoin Hohenlohe's corps, with the intention of afterwards taking the same road back, and forcing the passage of the defile with the whole of the Prussian army. He accordingly gave the signal for retreat, and conducted his columns towards Weimar. Davoust, who on his side had lost nearly a quarter of his effective force, and whose troops were sinking from exhaustion, was unable to impede the march of the king's army. It arrived, therefore, in pretty good order, as far as the heights of Apolda, half way between Auerstädt and Weimar. But at this point they found, drawn up in battle array, Bernadotte's corps, which had come in all haste from Dornburg, and almost at the same time they were overwhelmed by a crowd of Hohenlohe's fugitives, who rushed upon them, dismayed with terror, and closely followed by our cavalry, pursuing them in every direction. Obliged to change their line of retreat, in the midst of so great a confusion, the Prussian army fell in disorder towards Sommerda. A panic very quickly spread among the divisions, who dispersed along all the roads leading from Erfurt to Weissensee.

Such was the famous disaster, which, in a single day, destroyed the power of the Prussian monarchy. Notwithstanding this overwhelming catastrophe, the honour of the army remained intact, for the troops had fought with the greatest courage. But badly led, and for a long time

unaccustomed to war, they had suddenly found themselves inferior in number, fighting with an army commanded by an unparalleled captain, who possessed in the highest degree that rapidity and irresistible impetuosity which only a long succession of victories gives. The issue of a struggle, entered upon under such deplorable conditions, was inevitable. We may add, too, that the battle of Jena rather resembled a slaughter than a fight. Its consequences were still more terrible. When once this army was destroyed, all resistance became impossible, and Prussia remained exposed to the mercy of the conqueror.

Napoleon gave an account of his victory with even more incorrectness than usual, in order to obliterate all trace of the mistake which had exposed Davoust's isolated corps to such great peril. This marshal had had to struggle against the largest portion of the Prussian army, while the Emperor was crushing the weakest part with double forces. Napoleon completely reversed the parts in his fifth bulletin. He had had before him *eighty thousand men*, while Davoust had only had to fight *fifty thousand*.[1] He only made a very secondary incident of the battle of Auerstädt in the battle of Jena, while it was in reality the chief and decisive event. He, however, deigned to recognise that Davoust 'had displayed remarkable courage and great firmness of character, the first qualities in a soldier.' These praises were very inadequate to the worth of which the marshal gave proof in this battle, and Napoleon rendered him far greater justice in his private letters. His anger fell on Bernadotte, who had done nothing but obey his instructions. Napoleon bitterly reproached him for his long promenade between the two fields of battle, and pretended that he had sent him during the night an order to reinforce Davoust; but this very improbable assertion, seeing the known prudence of Bernadotte, has never been proved.

The vanquished people waited with curiosity to know

[1] An error so much the more voluntary and calculated, that he aggravated it in the *Rélation officielle*, which he drew up several years after the event. This report was published in the *Mémorial du dépôt de la guerre*, vol. viii.

what Napoleon would do with Germany, which was now delivered over without defence to the caprice of his ambition. They soon learned what they had to expect. Among the German princes who had not joined the Confederation of the Rhine, there were two whom he had tried to arm against Prussia at the commencement of the war. One, the Elector of Saxony, had united his troops to those of the enemy; the other, the Elector of Hesse-Cassel, though the Prussians had for an instant occupied his capital, had maintained the strictest neutrality.

Conduct so different did not, it would seem, deserve the same treatment from Napoleon; nor did they in reality receive the same, but in a contrary sense to what might have been expected. He sent back the Saxon prisoners on parole, with all sorts of flattering compliments for their sovereign who had made war on us, and he confiscated the states of the Elector of Hesse-Cassel who had remained neutral. Historians have as usual repeated, with regard to this incident, all the fables that Napoleon chose to invent, in order to cast odium on the prince whom he had resolved to despoil. This *crafty* prince, as he has been called, had a peculiarity—which is not singular even among men who are not princes—he wished to protect himself. When called upon to pronounce between two powerful enemies, who both coveted his spoils, he had followed the culpable suggestion of not declaring for either, and had remained quietly in his capital, after having informed them of his intention to maintain his neutrality. If this had not given him any claim to our friendship, neither did it call for our hatred. But Napoleon had already some time before resolved to create a new state in Germany, which he intended either for Murat or Jérôme; and unfortunately for the Elector of Cassel, Upper Hesse occupied exactly the geographical position that he had chosen, while Saxony was much too far off to play this providential part. Whatever, therefore, the unfortunate elector might do, Napoleon had decided beforehand to find him guilty, and we know how ingenious he was in creating wrong for those who had done none. At the last moment, the prince, warned of the

danger that he was running, asked after long hesitation to form part of the Confederation of the Rhine. He threw himself, as if fascinated, into the arms of the enemy. Napoleon coldly refused. He had formed other plans for him. The 30th of September, on the eve of entering upon the campaign, writing to his brother Louis, he recommended him 'to behave well to the elector, to keep on good terms with him, to express great esteem for him, in order,' as he said, 'to maintain him for some time still in his neutrality;' but he informed him at the same time that 'when once the first act of the war was over, he should perhaps require him to conquer Cassel, to drive out the elector, and disarm his troops.' This did not hinder him from declaring, just at the same time, in a letter to the prince primate, '*that he had no reason to complain of the elector, and that he would never attack him of his own free will.*'[1]

The day after Jena the first act of the war was finished, to make use of Napoleon's expression, and his tone suddenly changed. A note, drawn up in an equivocal style, was sent to the elector to inform him that the Emperor was aware of his secret adhesion to the coalition. It alleged against him as a crime that he had not repulsed the Prussian troops when they passed through Cassel, and, what was quite a contradictory reproach, that he had not disbanded his own army. This conduct obliged him to occupy his states. He might have thought from this ambiguous language that the occupation was a simple measure of precaution. But Mortier received the same day much more explicit instructions; Napoleon ordered him to seize the person of the elector and send him prisoner to Metz; he was at once to disarm the Hessian army, and administer the states in the name of the Emperor. 'My intention is,' added Napoleon, '*that the House of Hesse shall cease to reign*, and be struck out of the list of powers.'[2] He announced this event in his bulletin of November 4th, overwhelming the elector with the greatest insult, and concluded with the consoling prophecy, 'the population of Hesse-Cassel *will be happier.*

[1] Napoleon to the Prince Primate, October 1.
[2] Napoleon to Mortier, October 23.

Freed from military service, they will be able to devote themselves peaceably to the cultivation of their land; relieved from a portion of their taxes, *they will be governed on generous and liberal principles*,—the principles that guide the administration of France and of her allies.' The unfortunate Hessians, whose bones whitened with our own on all the battlefields of Europe, soon learned what to think of this cooing of the dove, and the unmingled felicity which this good composer of pastorals promised them. They were only too quickly enabled to make the comparison between the *crafty prince* and the honest Emperor.

Napoleon was not a man to lose time in reaping the fruits of the victory of Jena. The very day after the battle he levied a contribution of a hundred and fifty-nine millions on the conquered country, and decreed *that all English merchandise found in the towns of the north would belong to the army*.[1]

This act of brigandage, which was about to ruin, by a single blow, all the merchants in the north of Germany, without their having given us the slightest cause of complaint, since they were punished for acts prior to our occupation, was a prelude to the famous decree of Berlin. Napoleon had already sent his troops in every direction in pursuit of the flying remnant of the Prussian army, without giving them time to unite and rally. Blücher succeeded in escaping to Colleda, by alleging the conclusion of an armistice, which the king of Prussia had in fact demanded, but not obtained. Murat rushed with his cavalry upon Erfurt, from thence upon Nordhausen, and then upon Magdeburg, a central point towards which the prince of Hohenlohe and Marshal Kalkreuth were directing their steps with the greater number of the fugitives. Ney and Soult followed him there, capturing on their way whole regiments, which were surprised and disconcerted by the rapidity of our movements. Davoust marched upon Leipsic. Bernadotte had removed to Halle, where he found a detachment of about twelve thousand men, under the orders of Prince Eugène of Wurtemberg. These troops were not

[1] Decree from Jena, October 16. Article V.

in sufficient number to withstand Bernadotte's *corps d'armée;* they only yielded, however, after a vigorous resistance, which cost us a great many dead and wounded. Napoleon had gone in all haste to Merseburg. Visiting the field of battle after the fight, he perceived a heap of corpses belonging to the 32d demi-brigade, which had particularly distinguished themselves in this bloody combat. When he was told who they were, he indulged in one of those familiar jests which had the effect of electrifying the brutal soldiers, though why it is difficult to conceive, for it would be hard to say what there was to fire them in this cruel and heartless expression of contempt, insolence, and inhumanity. 'Still some of the 32d!' he exclaimed, in the tone of a gambler who finds a sum at the bottom of his pocket which he thought he had already spent. '*I had so many of them killed* in Egypt, in Italy, and everywhere, that I thought I should never hear anything more of them.'[1] General Rapp, who, notwithstanding his rough soldierly manners, still possessed a certain amount of intelligence and humanity, quotes these words with an evident sincere admiration. There is a psychological mystery in this that is worthy of attention. The fanatical adoration of the soldiers for a man who treated them with less consideration than is ordinarily shown for race-horses and fighting-cocks, is calculated considerably to lower the pride of human nature.

While Murat, Soult, and Ney were marching upon Magdeburg to invest it, Davoust entered Wittenberg with Augereau, and Lannes Dessau. We were masters of the Elbe. On the 24th of October Napoleon arrived at Potsdam, and the next day Davoust made his entry into Berlin. The Emperor stopped a few days at the château of Sans-Souci, and visited the tomb of the great Frederick. He carried off the sword of this illustrious man, and did not blush to send the barbarous trophy to Paris, as if he was impatient to conquer and disarm, even in his tomb, the only captain of modern times whose reputation could give him umbrage. His apologists think this conduct quite natural. What would they say of the conqueror who

[1] *Mémoires* of Rapp.

should come and carry off Napoleon's sword from the Invalides? He had already, on his arrival at Naumburg, ordered to be taken and thrown into a cart the humble stone which was raised in the middle of a field to mark the victory of Rossbach, as if he could efface the past, and rewrite history. This piece of revenge was that of a little mind, and Frederick would have scorned it. There are three points on which he rises far above Napoleon. He always despised charlatanry; he was great in misfortune; he employed iniquitous means, but, except in the division of Poland, they were generally for just and possible ends. Napoleon, moreover, took care to turn the name and example of Frederick to account in his bulletins. If we were to believe him, this sagacious and far-sighted sovereign would have had the prudence to spare his country such a catastrophe—he would have made himself the ally and friend of Napoleon. 'His spirit, his genius, his wishes,' he wrote in his seventeenth bulletin, 'were with our nation, whom he esteemed so highly, and of whom he said, that if he had been their king, not a cannon would have been fired in Europe without his permission.' But while he enrolled the shade of the great Frederick against the Court of Berlin, he lost no opportunity of abusing the queen, to whose influence he attributed the unexpected energy which the king had shown in declaring war. Accustomed to go straight to obstacles in order to destroy them, to consider them in an abstract manner, and in some sort only as mathematical forces,—a stranger to all scruples of delicacy or generosity, indifferent to any feelings, prejudices, and rules of propriety,—he only regarded this unfortunate woman as a power to be annihilated, no matter by what means; and he attacked her with the only arms that he could employ against her,—ridicule, abuse, and calumny. There was not a bulletin in which he did not recur to this favourite subject, and we might fill a volume with all that he wrote against her. He exhibited the same methodical and calculated malignity in destroying the influence and reputation of this woman, that he would have displayed in causing a regiment to be shot or a bastion to be blown up.

After having depicted her as a person 'with a pretty enough face, *but little intelligence*,'[1] he endeavoured to render her odious to the people as the sole author of this calamitous war. By what strange mystery had this woman, who had hitherto been absorbed 'in the grave occupation of dress, come to meddle in the affairs of the State, to influence the king, and excite in others the anger that possessed her?' The explanation was found, according to Napoleon, in an engraving, very common at that time, 'which represented on one side the *handsome emperor* of Russia and the queen close to him, and on the other, the king stretching out his hand over the tomb of the great Frederick. The queen, draped in a shawl, *very much like the engravings of Lady Hamilton in London*, is placing her hand on her heart, and appears to be looking at the emperor of Russia. The shade of Frederick,' adds Napoleon, 'must have been indignant at *this scandalous scene*.'[2]

Lest this allusion to the supposed domestic troubles of the king of Prussia should not be clear enough for him, Napoleon recurred to them again in the following bulletins: —'All Prussians attribute the misfortunes of Prussia to the *journey of the Emperor Alexander*. The change which was then wrought in the mind of the queen, who from being *a timid and modest woman* became turbulent and warlike, was a *sudden revolution*. Every one admits that the queen is the author of the evils from which the Prussian nation is suffering. We hear it said everywhere how much she has changed since *that fatal interview with the Emperor Alexander! . . . The portrait of the emperor of Russia, which he gave as a present to the queen, has been found in her apartment at Potsdam*.'[3] How gladly would Napoleon have supplemented this slight piece of evidence by the production of passionate letters from the guilty pair. Such circumstances as these indicate the defect of Napoleon's moral organisation, amounting, in fact, to an absence of ordinary intelligence. He outraged the most delicate scruples of the human conscience because such sentiments

[1] Ninth bulletin. [2] Seventeenth bulletin.
[3] Eighteenth and nineteenth bulletins.

had no existence in his own heart. He made a grave mistake in treating other men as if they were as utterly devoid as he was himself of all sentiment of honour and morality. He did not perceive that these base insinuations against a fugitive and disarmed woman by a man who commanded five hundred thousand soldiers would produce an effect exactly contrary to what he intended; that they were calculated not only to excite disgust in all noble minds, but they were revolting even to the most vulgar.

When once the Elbe was crossed, the whole of Prussia was ours as far as the Oder. Spandau surrendered the 25th of October. Hohenlohe, after having lost two days in rallying the remnant of his troops at Magdeburg, retreated in all haste to Stettin, at the mouth of the Oder. But Murat's cavalry had already outstripped him, and the country was overrun with Lannes' troops. Attacked and beaten at Zehdenick, and afterwards surrounded between Prenzlow and Pasewalk, he laid down his arms on the 28th of October. The next day, Stettin surrendered on the first summons. Küstrin capitulated at the same time on the first appearance of Davoust. After the great disaster which had marked the opening of the campaign, the Prussian troops were completely demoralised. They considered all resistance useless, and the spectacle that they offered differs in nothing from that which the downfall of all empires presents, particularly that of a centralised monarchy. When the keystone is loosened the whole edifice falls to the ground. When the centre is in the hands of the enemy the extremities lose all strength, and their defence is no longer thought of. Hence these generals in confusion, and these garrisons which go before the enemy to deliver up their places. Only Magdeburg still held out, and it was not long before it surrendered. The day before, November 7th, a last detachment of the Prussian army, commanded by Blücher, had yielded. Cut off from his retreat upon the Oder, this general had been obliged suddenly to fall back from east to west. Hotly pursued by the *corps d'armée* of Bernadotte and Soult, Blücher had succeeded, after a perilous march, in getting into Lübeck; but our troops

entered it almost as soon as himself, and delivered over this unfortunate town to all the horrors of an assault. He escaped, however, but was overtaken again the following day, driven towards the sea; and, surrounded without ammunition between the Trave, the neutral frontier of Denmark, and the troops which closed every other issue, Blücher capitulated in his turn, after having shared with the duke of Weimar the honour of firing the last shot of the campaign against the enemies of his country.

In spite of the misfortunes of this great defeat—in the midst of the inexpressible confusion of these scenes of discouragement—many noble examples had been given, the memory of which was not to perish, and the Prussian nation had at least the consolation of being able to impute their reverse of fortune to inexperience and the disproportion of forces, rather than to the weakness of their defenders. Their most renowned generals had sought death on the battlefield; the princes of the royal family had exposed themselves—they had shed their blood with the most brilliant courage; the nobility of which the corps of officers was almost exclusively composed, had seen the *élite* of their sons fall under the balls of our soldiers. Prussia had been crushed—she had not been degraded. Deep and universal grief and true patriotic despair had succeeded to the presumptuous confidence of the first days, and these sentiments were shared by all classes, although the blow had fallen particularly on those whose rank and privilege had exposed them to envy. The enmity which, according to their custom, the French endeavoured to provoke against the aristocracy of the country, in the name of the principles of a revolution from which they were now farther removed than any other nation, found but a faint echo in Prussia. The towns in general gave them a cold and dull reception, consistent with the dignity of an unmerited defeat. When our troops entered Magdeburg after the capitulation of the place, they saw—what was a far graver sign—the Prussian soldiers insulting their officers, and reproaching them in bitter terms for not having prolonged the resistance.[1] And

[1] Fezensac: *Souvenirs Militaires.*

although the nature of the country was extremely unfavourable to guerilla warfare, men like Schill, Brunswick-Oels, the sons of the vanquished at Auerstädt, and later Blücher himself, were soon seen to take the field, and execute the boldest strokes in the midst of our cantonments.

On the 27th of October Napoleon made a triumphal entry into Berlin at the head of his army, in order from the first day to strike terror into the capital by an immense display of military force. The authorities of the town, headed by General Hullin, came to present him the keys of Berlin. He received the deputation with great military parade, with a haughty and irritated countenance, and with all the externals which he judged fit to increase their intimidation. At the head of these magistrates was the Prince von Hatzfeld, to whom the king of Prussia had entrusted the civil government. Napoleon, who wished to humiliate the nobility and flatter the middle classes, whom he supposed less accessible to the susceptibilities of patriotism and national honour, drove the Prince von Hatzfeld out of his presence. 'Do not present yourself before me,' he said; 'I have no need of your services—retire to your estates!'[1] He afterwards summoned the Count de Neale, and harshly rebuked him for the noble sentiments the count's daughter had expressed, in a letter that had been intercepted; ascribing the misfortunes of the war to the intrigues of the nobility and the court, he exclaimed: '*The good people of Berlin* are the victims of the war, while those who drew it upon the country are saved. *I will reduce the nobility of the court to such a degree that they will be obliged to beg their bread.*'[2] He began the very next day to put this threat into execution, by striking the Prussian nobility through this same Prince von Hatzfeld, whom he had treated so brutally in his audience of the evening before. His first care on entering Berlin had been to lay hands on the post, and open all the correspondence, both public and private. The prince had just written to his sovereign, to give him an account of our entrance into Berlin, and he was so far from suspecting that there could be anything criminal in so natural an act, that he had not

[1] Twenty-first bulletin. [2] *Ibid.*

hesitated to trust his communication to the post. This letter, a copy of which has been preserved, and which is extremely insignificant, was shown to Napoleon. He immediately seized it as the pretext of which his policy had need, to make an example of the Prussian nobility. He forthwith issued a decree to bring the Prince von Hatzfeld before a military commission, *composed of seven colonels*, to be tried as a *traitor and a spy*. The appointment of the seven colonels recalled the evil history of Palm and of the Duc d'Enghien. It clearly announced what the judgment would be. With regard to the imputation of espionage and treachery, which they dared to cast on an honourable and feeling man, for an inoffensive communication addressed to a prince without states and without an army, who was already menaced in his distant refuge beyond the Oder, as if the safety of our two hundred thousand soldiers had depended on the disclosure of events which had been witnessed by a whole nation, it was impudent and derisive to the highest degree. Napoleon's most intimate and most submissive generals, Duroc, Berthier, and Rapp, were indignant at the idea of seeing the blood shed of an honourable and estimable man, whose only crime was that he had remained faithful to his sovereign. They surrounded Napoleon, and entreated him in accents of the deepest grief not to tarnish his own glory, nor make executioners of his companions. They found him so much the more inflexible that his resolution was the result of a cold and studied calculation. He merely applied methodically on this occasion the system which in all his letters he urged Joseph to adopt in Naples,—to show himself terrible in the first moment, in order to suppress in the vanquished all idea of revolt, and to be able afterwards to gain all hearts by an unhoped-for gentleness. Such was the revived precept of Cæsar Borgia, which the Emperor adopted as his favourite maxim, and which the mild Joseph could never bring himself to put into practice. The Prince von Hatzfeld was only chosen for a victim on account of his high position, and the well-known part that he had taken in the declaration of war. Happily for him, his friends

succeeded in hiding him for the first few days, and the delay saved his life. The impression of horror produced by the mere announcement of the fate that was reserved for him, was so general that it became impossible to think of the execution. The right moment had slipped by, and Napoleon, feeling the effect of so atrocious an act, that had been rumoured abroad beforehand, arranged that scene of clemency by which historians with more sensibility than penetration have so often been touched. Never was a man more loudly extolled for having abstained from assassination.

After Napoleon's refusal to grant an armistice, conferences for a treaty of peace were opened on the 20th of October at Wurtemberg, between the marquis of Lucchesini and Duroc. The Emperor was in a position to dictate his conditions, and he did so with the rigour of a pitiless conqueror. The cession of all the provinces that Prussia possessed between the Elbe and the Rhine, an engagement not to interfere for the future in the affairs of Germany, the payment of an indemnity, and the recognition of all the new princes that he proposed to establish on the German territory,—such were the requirements that Duroc was charged to notify to Prussia.[1] Lucchesini hastened to communicate these hard conditions to his master, who, disgusted with the war, and anxious to put an end to it, immediately sent him his ratification. Napoleon refused to sign the treaty which he had himself drawn up. In the interval our troops had won fresh victories; Magdeburg was about to capitulate, and the Polish envoys proposed to organise a rising in the rear of the Russian and Prussian armies. A new horizon opened before Napoleon, and projects of inordinate ambition filled his mind. Russia was the last state that could resist him on the Continent. He would raise up Poland against her. He immediately wrote to Fouché to send him Kosciusko. He who, the previous year, would only make peace separately with his enemies, now declared to the Russian plenipotentiaries that he would not desist from his conquests in Prussia till

[1] Lucchesini: *Sulla causa e gli effetti della Confederazione renana.*

England had restored all our colonies, as well as those of Holland, and till Russia had signed an engagement to guarantee the independence of Moldavia and Wallachia. It was according to the moderation of these two Powers that he would adjust the future state of the Prussian monarchy. He wished the misfortunes of the king of Prussia to influence the resolutions of Alexander and the British Cabinet, and he thus renewed the ties of their former friendship. Prussia was no longer anything more in his eyes than an exchangeable equivalent, like Portugal at the time of the peace of Amiens. Should he allow her to subsist as a monarchy? Should he make a republic of it, as he proposed to M. Bignon? He deliberated, and the remark escaped his lips, '*that in ten years his dynasty would be the most ancient in Europe!*' Meanwhile Prussia was a pledge which he was in no hurry to restore, an offensive position against Russia, a basis of operations for his army, and an inexhaustible mine to work for his finances and his supplies. In order to prevent all remonstrance and all solicitation on this point, he hastened to give publicity to his resolution by binding himself by a solemn and irrevocable declaration.

'So much success,' he wrote in his bulletin of November 10th, 'ought not to slacken military preparations in France . . . the French army will not quit Poland and Berlin till the possessions of the Spanish, Dutch, and French colonies have been restored, and a general peace made.' A few days later, on the 21st of November 1806, a measure that was much more extraordinary than any of those that he had hitherto adopted, put the finishing stroke to the system, by means of which he flattered himself that he should vanquish and subdue England. This system, which had been announced by several preparatory acts, such as the league of the neutrals, and the seizure of the English merchandise in the towns of the north, consisted in closing the Continent to British commerce. The indispensable preliminary of such an enterprise, if he meant it to be anything more than a vain fanfaronnade, was the conquest of the Continent;—a work which was, it is true,

already very far advanced, but of which the completion would present many difficulties. The question has been endlessly discussed as to whether the right of retaliation authorised Napoleon to adopt such a measure, in order to punish England for the abuses that she committed in the exercise of her right to search and of blockade. This is asking whether it is lawful to reply to an injustice of which we had to complain, by a monstrous iniquity of which the victims were strangers to the contest. It would be more useful to examine whether, after having passed the measure, it was in his power to execute it. Now, this pretended retaliation was not only a thousand times more revolting than the abuses that it was to repress, but it was the vainest and most chimerical of dreams. The abuses of which Napoleon complained were positive and great; they were often even odious, but it must not be forgotten that those which excited his greatest indignation in the English had been his own work. How could he dare to reproach them with making prisoners of the sailors in his merchant vessels, he who had made prisoners not only of sailors in merchant vessels, but of all the private individuals who were in France, Holland, and Italy at the time of the rupture? How dared he allege the blockade of the Elbe and the Weser against them as a crime, he who had only seized the mouths of these rivers in order to close them to their commerce? What, however, were the inconvenience and abuses of the right of search, compared to the evils and privations, which he felt justified in inflicting on the Continent in order to avenge his own injuries? To close the Continent to English merchandise was to deprive it not only of the manufacturing products of England, but of all the products of the new world, many of which, being articles of daily consumption, were the necessaries of life. It was still more. It was the destruction of the whole of the European merchant service, which was incapable of resisting the British navy. And he supposed that the people were credulous enough to impute to England the evils of which he was so obviously the sole author! He supposed them blind enough to league together against the only nation

that had not yielded to him, to starve for admiration for so great a man, to rejoice in their own ruin provided that it insured his last victory, to espouse at the price of so much suffering and so many sacrifices the quarrel of an insatiable conqueror, whom they had only known by his spoliation!

Such were the extravagant illusions which gave birth to the famous decree of Berlin. It had, from its very beginning, one radical defect. This was the impossibility of being carried out, for its execution required not only the docility but the zeal and concurrence of the populations that were to be its victims! It produced plenty of evils and vexations, but it was never a law except on paper, and may be regarded less as an act than as an outbreak of powerless anger. This king of kings, who could not by uniting all his resources and all his means, succeed in floating a single bark, decreed with superb sangfroid, '*that the British Isles would henceforth be in a state of blockade!*' He forbade all commerce and all correspondence with them; he decided that any English subjects found in the countries occupied by our troops should be made prisoners of war; that all English merchandise should be seized, wherever it was discovered; and that *any property whatever* belonging to an English subject should be declared lawful prize. In reading this senseless decree, we involuntarily think of all those kings by chance, of those favourites of the multitude, whose sudden elevation turned their brain. We seem to hear the tribune Rienzi, on the top of the capitol, extending his sword to the four cardinal points, and exclaiming: *that is mine, that is mine, that is mine!* Talleyrand had orders immediately to communicate this decree to all our allies, including Denmark, whom he was specially charged to inform that *Napoleon did not intend to violate treaties*, but he hoped that the Cabinet of Copenhagen *would not allow any regular mail nor any English post-office in Denmark.*[1] The decree was sent to the senate with a message in which Napoleon said in substance, that 'as *his extreme moderation* had alone led to the renewal of the war, he had been forced to take steps which were repugnant to his feelings, for it

[1] Napoleon to Talleyrand, November 21.

was very painful to him to make private individuals suffer for a quarrel of kings, and *to return after so many years of civilisation to the principles of inhumanity which mark the early records of nations.*'[1]

He could not better describe this monument of madness and pride. The decree of Berlin was read throughout Europe with still more surprise than indignation, for if Napoleon's tyranny was justly held in execration, there was a general belief in his political genius; and after such an act of frenzy, it was impossible not to recognise that the intoxication of success had disturbed the lucidity of a mind that was prodigious in the conduct of military operations. This decree was about, in fact, invincibly and eternally to bind Europe to England. The European nations had doubtless for some time past been led to desire the success of the British cause, but this feeling existed chiefly among the political and governing classes, who are in general more sensible than others in questions of independence. In consequence of the decree of Berlin, the most humble classes were about to suffer most. The popular masses, whom we had hitherto spared, became the most interested in our defeat, and in the triumph of England. The continental blockade brought want, privation, and misery into every house, into the bosom of the poorest families, and made them our enemies. No measure contributed more to raise the populations against us, and to hasten the fall of the imperial *régime.* Napoleon's message to the senate concluded with a very unexpected demand, even for those who least believed in his declarations in favour of peace. After such brilliant victories—won, as he assured them, almost without the loss of men; after those triumphant bulletins, in which he stated that out of an army of a hundred and twenty thousand men he had taken a *hundred and seventy thousand* prisoners; after all the levies of men that he had just made in France and in Germany,—they had perhaps a right to hope for a little calm and repose, and they flattered themselves that they had well earned it; but instead of dreaming of anything of the kind, he required

[1] Napoleon's message to the Senate, November 21.

the senate to place at his disposition eighty thousand conscripts, who, according to the ordinary rules, ought not to have started till a year later, in September 1807. 'And in what more favourable moment,' he said, in giving this order to the senators, 'could we call these young Frenchmen to arms? In order to join the service they will have to cross the capitals of our enemies, and fields of battle made glorious by the victory of their elders.'

The senators, like many other prudent and moderate men, had rejoiced at the rapidity of our victories, because they thought it was the pledge of a speedy re-establishment of peace. They little understood the master they had chosen. This call for the rising generation, whose blood was annually shed, proved how much they were mistaken. At the same time the decree of Berlin caused their first serious apprehensions about the future of the man to whom they had united their destiny, and unhappily that of their country also. In contempt of the clearest warnings and the commonest foresight, they had made a great man, they had created a Cæsar. They had veiled his infirmities from the eyes of a deceived nation; they had given him the honour of their work, sacrificed to him their share of glory; they had, in a word, concentrated in him all their strength, popularity, and intelligence; they had made themselves the servile instruments of his power, in the hope of being admitted to a share, if not of its homage, at least of its enjoyment. Now the idol was completed, the hero had released himself from their feeble hold; it was too late to stop him, too late to undeceive his adorers. In vain they endeavoured to check him, in vain their trembling lips stammered out advice that he did not listen to; they had to follow him without truce and without repose; after having made Cæsar, they had to give him the world.

It is a characteristic and honourable thing for the clear-sightedness of that invisible, impersonal, and incorruptible judge that forms public opinion, that it was just when Napoleon reached this giddy height—just when he seemed most unassailable—when, however, his brain was beginning to be turned—that persistent rumours, which had no real

foundation, first predicted his fate as near and inevitable. The police attributed these predictions to false news, but what they could not control was the temper of the popular mind, which caused such reports to be believed. There was something more in this than a party manœuvre; there was a deep and firm conviction that such brilliant success was only apparent, that this immeasurable grandeur was an unreal dream, a wonder that could not endure. This was what the world with the infallible correctness of public good sense generally felt, and it was this that gained credit for the most extraordinary stories. Such rumours naturally irritated Napoleon, for they not only proved that the people believed such stories, but that they no longer believed either in him or in his work. He saw his genius questioned and his star insulted. The credence that these reports obtained was a lie given to him by the most unassailable of contradictors. The same day that we made our triumphal entry into Berlin, it was suddenly reported that Italy had been taken by the English, that Masséna had been killed, and that the Russians had driven us out of Dalmatia.[1] Napoleon in exasperation replied that he had two hundred thousand men in Italy, twenty-five thousand in Dalmatia, that his German army was upon the Vistula, and had never been stronger. What did this signify? What was at the bottom of the public mind—and what it was out of his power to destroy—was the idea that, in the perilous and abnormal situation in which we then were, reverses had become more probable than victory; and this conviction was so natural that Napoleon recognised it even in the anxieties of the men who were most devoted to him, and who had the most reason to stifle it. 'My cousin,' he wrote to Cambacérès, on the 16th of November, '*where did you learn that Spain had joined the coalition?* We were never on better terms with Spain. All her strong places are in our hands.'

Cambacérès did not know he was so near the truth, and, in reality, his fears somewhat anticipated the event. But whether the fact was correct or not—whether it happened one

[1] Twenty-ninth bulletin, November 10, 1806.

day or another—it appeared probable, and it was this that was grave. From all these reports, true and false, a strong impression was left that the phantasmagoria could not endure; that such a rule had neither stability nor reason for its existence; that it was contrary to the nature of things and to the progress of the human mind; that it could only be regarded as a phantom, as an accidental and passing phenomenon; in short, that it was time to return to a wiser policy, if they wished to save a portion of what they had acquired.

CHAPTER VI

NAPOLEON AND POLAND—CAMPAIGNS OF PULTUSK AND EYLAU

(*November* 1806-*February* 1807)

THE decree of Berlin, the execution of the first measures of the continental blockade, together with the declarations which had preceded and followed this extraordinary act, comprised an entirely new system of politics, and the results which ensued from it were as nothing compared with the apprehensions to which it gave rise. Hitherto the gigantic prospects which for so long had occupied Napoleon's mind, had only been divulged by abrupt speeches that might have been taken for imprudent expressions or the sudden outbursts of passion, which would have no perceptible influence on his conduct. When he was several times heard to exclaim 'that he would conquer England on the Continent,' no one ever thought of attributing to him the foolish plan of conquering the Continent to arm it against England. Nevertheless such was the idea that had in reality taken hold of him. To have conceived the thought however was nothing; the danger lay in expressing it publicly, and it was just this which, in the intoxication into which the victory of Jena had thrown him, he ventured to do. Though at first inclined to observe certain limits in the midst of his success, and to accord peace to the king of Prussia at the price of all his provinces situated on this side of the Elbe, the rapid crumbling of the Prussian monarchy, the silent stupor of the governments, and the apparent resignation of the nations, made him lose all sense of moderation. He

thought that he had only one more step to take in order to be master of Europe, that it was useless to dissemble any longer; he therefore disclosed his secret, as if he feared it would not be guessed. He declared that he would not restore Prussia and the conquered countries till England had restored our colonies. He announced his intention 'of reconquering the sea upon land and recovering Pondicherry upon the Oder and the Vistula.' He summoned the continental states to choose between war with England and war with France. He rendered neutrality impossible. He gave them the alternative of declaring themselves our enemies or our allies.

By our allies he meant our subjects. There could no longer be any doubt upon this point since Bonaparte directed French politics. The harsh treatment to which he had subjected states that misfortune or blindness had placed at his mercy, allowed of no hesitation in those who could still attempt a struggle or prepare resistance. To the European Powers the continental blockade, with the arrogant explanations that accompanied it, represented something more than the privations, misery, and vexations of this unprecedented league of custom-house officers: it exhibited to them with alarming distinctness the inexorable dilemma of a war with Napoleon, or submissive compliance to his will. To place them by degrees and unconsciously between such alternatives was rash in the extreme, and it is very doubtful whether the genius of Napoleon would ever have sufficed for the task, even with forces superior to those which he could command; but to throw down the gauntlet before he had made it impossible for them to pick it up was sheer madness. To attempt the enterprise was chimerical; to boast of it was the most puerile and dangerous bravado. This avowal was equivalent to a claim to an universal kingdom. It was declaring to Europe that she was henceforth to form but one state under a despotism of iron. It is impossible to deny that there existed at that time strong elements of unity in the disposition and ideas of the European nations, which had been created by the long teaching of the eighteenth century. It is to this com-

mencement of intellectual and moral unity that we owed the facility with which we had been everywhere able to overthrow old institutions. It is thanks to this that Napoleon had so promptly succeeded in establishing his domination over so many nations; and, to put it abstractly, he historically represented nothing more than a premature effort of these elements to combine and coalesce. But happily Europe possessed too much intelligence, independence, energy, and moral dignity; too much true civilisation, in a word, for this great transformation—which the future will doubtless see—to be effected by the means of brute force, and to be personified by a tyrant. It was enough for it to be displayed in the form of a revived Cæsarism of the Lower Empire to cause it to be rejected with horror.

Such was the fresh attitude which Bonaparte had just assumed in his last manifestoes, after his brilliant triumphs over the Prussian monarchy. This change, which had been prepared for long before, did not at once strike all minds, nor were its consequences immediately felt, but it deserves the more notice because it marks the exact period at which France lost that marvellous power of attraction which she derived from her revolution, and which gave her her temporary influence. Hitherto, in spite of all the acts of violence and treachery which had dispelled their illusions, the nations had continued to regard her as an instrument of deliverance and liberation: they henceforth began to consider her as the fearful personification of conquest, oppression, and despotism. At the time of our entrance into Poland we had striking evidence of the existence of these sentiments among a people who by nature, by tradition, and by interest, were the least disposed to share them.

Napoleon, after having definitely refused to grant to the king of Prussia the treaty of peace which he had first offered, had flattered himself that he could force him to accept an armistice which would permit our army peaceably to take up their winter quarters and organise the conquered country, while waiting for a renewal of hostilities. But King Frederick William, though greatly dispirited by the misfortunes that had fallen upon him, had not so completely lost his head

as to yield such great advantages to his enemy without some sort of compensation. He refused to ratify the suspension of arms, which his representatives had signed in order to gain time, and Napoleon was compelled, in spite of the bad season, to carry on the war on the Vistula and to occupy suddenly the Polish provinces (November 1806).

As early as the time of his entrance into Berlin, he had foreseen the possibility of this event. The moment he understood that Poland would become the theatre of the war, he immediately thought of turning the patriotism of the Poles to account. He had received the deputies from Prussian Poland, and had encouraged them by his warm words. He had done more. He had entered into formal engagements with them. 'When I see thirty or forty thousand Poles armed,' he had said to them, 'I will proclaim your independence at Warsaw, and when it comes from me it will be secure!'[1]

He had written to Fouché to send him Kosciusko. He had sent to Italy and to all parts of the empire for Dombrowski and other Polish officers, who were serving in our army, and had charged them to enrol and organise their countrymen. That he had in them a precious auxiliary, a lever of incalculable power, it was impossible to doubt, after the services which the Polish legions had already rendered us, and the inexpressible enthusiasm with which our soldiers had been received. It is still less possible to doubt it at the present time, when we think of all that Napoleon was able to obtain from the Poles by mere half promises, which he always evaded. That the re-establishment of Poland was an eminently just cause, a reparation necessary for a right equilibrium of Europe, is a truth that history has demonstrated with perfect evidence; and Bonaparte did not fail to invoke this argument in his diplomatic manifestoes of this period, whenever he had to justify his own encroachments. He invariably represented them as a legitimate return for the partition of Poland. We may add, too, that this cause was far more popular in France at that

[1] Napoleon's address in reply to one from Xavier Dzialynski, November 19, 1806.

time than it has ever been since. The ancient ties which united the two countries had been strengthened by a fraternity of arms, contracted in the midst of dangers which had surrounded our revolution. The Polish legions had mingled their blood with ours upon our most distant and most glorious fields of battle: Sulkowski had fallen at Cairo, Jablonowski in St. Domingo, and Dombrowski and Zajonchek had rendered their names illustrious in all our campaigns. When therefore the man who had turned to such good account the remembrance of the misfortunes of Poland and the illusions of her heroism, appeared as a conqueror upon the frontier of these unfortunate provinces, the inhabitants went out in crowds to meet him, and endeavoured to read the secret of their destinies in the words, by turns obscure and reassuring, which fell from his lips. Each asked himself the twofold question which historians still discuss: *Could* Napoleon re-establish Poland? and if he could, *Would* he do it?

To the question whether he could really do it in the unparalleled situation which he had created for himself in Europe, there are several very strong reasons for replying in the affirmative. It may reasonably be said that Napoleon, with the irresistible power with which he was then armed,—with Prussia crushed, Austria annihilated, and Russia powerless abroad, with the invincible national spirit which the Polish population manifested,—could have raised Poland by a word, and after having raised her was strong enough to maintain her. It was, it is true, far more difficult to complete this task than to commence it. The problem was not how to establish Poland, but how to give her a stable government. Napoleon had, however, a means of consolidating his work—that of securing by solemn pledges the concurrence of one of the powers whom he had set himself to humiliate and bring so low. Be this as it may, as the question belongs to the domain of historical conjectures, it is doomed to remain the subject of indefinite controversy; but if it is allowable to doubt whether this great resurrection depended solely on Napoleon—if it may even be denied that he possessed such power—it is indubi-

table that he *believed he did;* and it is, as I think, from this point of view that his conduct should be judged. His enigmatical policy towards Poland has generally been attributed to his desire to avoid making engagements that he would be unable to fulfil, to his dread of undertaking a task that he could not accomplish, of compromising the patriots whom he would afterwards be forced to abandon to their enemies. Such scruples would doubtless be honourable, but it must be acknowledged that they would have been very novel in him, and that they had been long dormant. If he had been alive to them, how would he have dared to do all that he did in Poland? Were not the thousands of men who rose to his appeal deceived? Did not they think that they were fighting for their country? How can we admit, moreover, that the man who, long before his power had attained this prodigious development, had not hesitated to provoke all Europe, sometimes for the possession of an island in the Mediterranean, sometimes for the satisfaction of a personal hatred, sometimes even for the vain pleasure of defying a power by claiming the right of passage through a neutral territory, who at that very moment had just exasperated all the European governments by an enterprise a thousand times more chimerical and dangerous than the establishment of Poland,—I mean the continental blockade,—how can we admit that, having acquired such an unheard-of degree of power, he would have considered as impossible the task of raising up a warlike nation, unanimous in its wishes, and who gave so many proofs of its indomitable vitality?

It is, therefore, incorrect to say that he was deterred by the difficulty of the undertaking or the fear of displeasing the European Powers, for his resolutions had never at any time been much influenced by these motives. He had arrrived at a period of his life in which his insatiable spirit only seemed to find in the impossibility of a project an additional stimulus to attempt it; similar in this to those worn-out voluptuaries who can only be excited by the obstacles that are put in their way. He by no means considered that it was beyond his power to re-establish the

independence of Poland, *but he did not wish to do it*, or if the transient wish entered his mind, he promptly banished it; and in this, whatever may be said to the contrary, he was only consistent with his character and his situation. How could he wish for independence in Poland,—he who suppressed it in all other nations, and even more resolutely among his allies than among his declared enemies? How could he flatter himself, moreover, that he could give the Poles independence without giving them at the same time liberty? How could he think that when once these generous and patriotic passions were let loose among fifteen millions of men, he would remain their master, and govern them at his pleasure? that the contagion of these noble sentiments would not sooner or later be communicated to his army, which, in spite of all, was still the daughter of the French Revolution? that the effect of this emotion, the sight of this spectacle, would have no effect on so many nations that were then mute and terrified, but who had not forgotten that they had known better days? The restoration of Poland involved a complete change in Napoleon's policy, in France as well as in Europe. It involved abroad the adoption of a system of moderation and equity that was calculated to give us the concurrence of all the nations in this great work of reparation; it involved at home a return to the generous traditions of 1789, for it is not given to a slave to play the part of a liberator. Napoleon was not a man to wish for anything of the kind, especially in the position in which fortune had placed him. He was at that time only occupied about one thing—the complete bondage of Europe—and he believed that he was on the point of realising this ambitious dream. He could therefore only regard a great national movement, bursting as it were on his path, as an embarrassment which might become a danger. Whatever he did, he was certain of the sympathy and support of the majority of the Poles. In order to preserve his influence over them, he only needed to give them half promises, and not to excite a national insurrection. He therefore only encouraged the Poles just so far as was necessary to obtain their services. If circumstances became

more difficult, he would have time to proclaim the independence of Poland. It was an expedient which he held in reserve for last extremities; a means of intimidation with the powers of the North; a sword always suspended over their heads.

Conjectures founded upon the character, the antecedents, and the situation of a man, are not vain hypotheses. Confirmed by his subsequent conduct, they constitute a certainty. They henceforth presented themselves so naturally to every clear-sighted mind, that when once the first emotion was calmed, and in the midst of illusions easily understood, which the presence of the French army in Poland created, a feeling of doubt and mistrust manifested itself among the men who were the most enlightened and the most devoted to their country. To the demand that was made them, to organise a general insurrection in Poland, they replied by requiring that Napoleon should begin by proclaiming their independence. This has been blamed in them as a sort of betrayal of their country. It has been said that such distrust was insulting and unseasonable; and these different reproaches have been grounded on a fact which certain writers regard as undoubted; namely, that Napoleon *sincerely wished* for the re-establishment of Poland.[1] But it is just this which has to be proved; and this proof is so much the more necessary because, whatever other qualities Napoleon may have possessed, his character was not remarkable for sincerity. What powerful reasons, then, had the Poles for having this blind faith in him; for placing themselves body and soul in his hands, without even requiring as a pledge some positive declaration? Was this pledge then so sure? If they considered his previous conduct towards other nations, how many times had he not only recognised and proclaimed, but guaranteed by solemn treaties, the independence of peoples whom he had by turns oppressed and betrayed? What had he done with the independence of the second Venetian Republic, which he had first created and then sold? What had he done with the Batavian, Cisalpine, Ligurian, and Helvetian Republics, guaranteed

[1] Bignon, Thibaudeau, Thiers, etc.

by him in the treaty of Lunéville? What had he done at the time of the expedition to Egypt with the independence of Turkey, so often recognised by him as necessary to the equilibrium of Europe? What had he done with the independence of Spain, his ally? Were these the precedents that were to inspire confidence in the Poles? And if they considered his previous relations with themselves, his policy towards their own cause, did they find there at least something to reassure them? After so much encouragement secured from him at the time of the formation of the legions of Dombrowski, had they not seen him, when he was reconciled with the Emperor Paul, order the books which they had published in favour of their country to be seized in France? Had they not seen him shortly after conclude with this same Russian Government a treaty which delivered over to the Czar the Polish refugees in France, in exchange for the French emigrants in Russia?[1] If these facts, which were still present to the memory of the nation, were not a clear proof that, after having compromised them and turned them to account, he would abandon them as soon as he saw a personal advantage in doing so, did they not at any rate give the Poles a right to demand a positive and formal engagement? What was it, after all, so exorbitant that they required, before they gave themselves wholly and unreservedly to him? Nothing more than one of those promises of which he had been so lavish—one of those declarations so often made and contradicted! Was this too much to ask, before the lives and property of a whole people were delivered up to him?

Such were the reflections which made the most enlightened leaders of the Polish nation hesitate to thrust their fellow-countrymen into the arms of Napoleon. Their scruples arose out of the purest patriotism, and they would have been guilty towards their country if they had not expressed them. Kosciusko, who lived in Paris, and was intimately acquainted with the most eminent men of the time, among whom it suffices to mention Lafayette, and who had seen closely the working of this harsh despotism,

[1] See on this subject vol. ii.

openly declared that he could not offer his sword to Napoleon, without previously stipulating for some guarantee for the independence and liberty of his country. The principal members of the Polish nobility spoke in the same way, as soon as they perceived, after the scenes of inexpressible enthusiasm which hailed our entrance into Posen and Warsaw, that instead of proclaiming their independence, as they had so fully expected, their liberators only replied to these transports by an enigmatical attitude, and began to ask them to make every sacrifice without being willing to enter into any engagement themselves. Those of Napoleon's lieutenants who were interested in the Polish cause undertook to transmit these views to their master, and beg him to yield to them. Davoust wrote to him from Warsaw, December 1st: 'Public spirit is excellent at Warsaw, but the nobles are using their influence to calm the ardour which is general among the middle classes. The uncertainty of the future alarms them, and they let it be clearly understood that they will make no movement, unless, by declaring their independence, we make a tacit engagement to guarantee it.' Murat, who cherished a secret hope of becoming king of Poland, entreated him still more warmly to pronounce this by a public and irrevocable declaration.

This counsel reached Napoleon just at a time when it was most likely to make an impression on his mind. He had been at Posen for several days; he had made his entry into the town under a triumphal arch, upon which was read this inscription: '*To the Liberator of Poland.*'[1] He had been received with transports of joy, and he boasted in all his letters of the patriotism and enthusiasm of the Poles. He had printed in the *Moniteur* that the partition of Poland was 'the most infamous spoliation of which history bears record.'[2] Instead of exaggerating the difficulties of the restoration of Poland, he calculated the forces of his enemies as very inferior to what they really were. He only reckoned Bennigsen's army at forty or fifty thousand men, which he thought he could very easily crush. In this state of mind, examining, according to his constant habit, the different

[1] *Moniteur* of Dec. 19, 1806. [2] *Moniteur* of Dec. 12, 1806.

chances which were open to him, before making a decision, he willingly cherished the idea of turning to account the grand movement which he saw manifested around us, by creating in Poland a sort of buttress for the fragile edifice of the Confederation of the Rhine, and at the same time a vast reservoir of men and horses for his future wars. In his anxiety to secure the choice of acting in one way or another according to circumstances, he wrote on the 1st of December to Andréossy, his ambassador at Vienna, to tranquillise the emperor of Austria, by declaring to him 'that the insurrection of Poland was a natural consequence of the presence of the French . . . that he had no intention whatever of interfering with Austrian Poland . . . but that if the emperor, feeling the difficulty of holding Austrian Poland in the midst of this movement, was willing to accept as an indemnity *a portion of Silesia*, Napoleon was ready to make the exchange.'[1]

As this proposition is the only proof ever alleged for Napoleon's pretended projects in favour of the independence of Poland, it deserves an attentive examination. It must first be observed that Napoleon offered Austria, not Silesia, as has so often been asserted, but a *portion* of Silesia, which is very different. It may further be remarked that, according to his invariable custom, he offered an indemnity taken from a neighbour, and more likely to alarm Austria than to seduce her, for the acceptance of Silesia would have been equivalent to a rupture with Prussia, Russia, and England. If Napoleon had sincerely wished to gain a power, which had only co-operated in the partition of Poland with repugnance, and almost under duress, he had in his hands a hundred other indemnities far better calculated to satisfy her than this province, which he was offering before he had conquered it. The strong places of Silesia, which he was disposing of so liberally, were in reality still in the power of the Prussians. It must also be remembered that this offer, which was almost derisive, so insufficient and precarious was it, was made to a power pitilessly crushed by the treaty of Presburg, driven to extremities by the most humiliating

[1] Napoleon to Andréossy, December 1, 1806.

proceedings, and reduced only to look for safety in our own ruin. We are therefore justified in concluding that, however infatuated Napoleon may then have been, his offer of a part of Silesia was not a serious one. He looked upon it rather as a means of sounding the dispositions of Austria, an opportunity of forcing her to manifest her secret sentiments, than as a bait likely to win her.

The same day on which he charged Andréossy to make this insidious proposition to Austria, Napoleon published, in his thirty-sixth bulletin, what may be called the terms of the problem of the Polish resurrection.

'It is difficult,' he said, 'to depict the enthusiasm of the Poles. Our entrance into Warsaw was a triumph, and the feeling displayed by Poles of all classes since our arrival can hardly be expressed. The love of their country and the national sentiment have not only been kept alive in the heart of the nation, but have been strengthened by misfortune. Their strongest passion, their greatest desire, is again to become a nation. The rich quit their castles to come and demand with loud cries the restoration of the nation, and offer their children, their fortune, and their influence.'

The statement of these facts in one of those famous bulletins, which had already changed the face of Europe, was in itself a plea for the re-establishment of Poland, and to the Poles especially only one conclusion appeared possible after such decisive grounds in favour of it. But it suited Napoleon to state the problem, and not to solve it. He accordingly raised the following question: 'Will the throne of Poland be established? Will this great nation recover its existence and its independence? Will it rise again from the tomb?' Then, instead of drawing some conclusions, and replying to these questions as a statesman who has to give a reason for his opinion, instead of dispelling illusions or putting an end to uncertainty by a frank and loyal declaration, tracing for each one the line of duty, he suddenly took refuge in a sort of theological subterfuge, such as casuists alone have the privilege of employing: '*God only*,' he replied, '*who holds in his hands*

the thread of all events, is the arbiter of this great political problem!'

If all that Napoleon could do for the Poles was to refer them to God, it was not worth while to have an army of five hundred thousand men. Any monk would have sufficed for that. It was announcing clearly enough that he reserved to himself the right of settling the question later, in whatever manner best suited his interests; but when he stated this ambiguous proposition, which might have been worded by an augur, he knew full well that the Poles would only read the premisses, and be the willing dupes of his equivocal conclusion. The next day, December 2d, Napoleon received the letter in which Murat informed him of the conditions which a part of the Polish nobility made in giving their concurrence; viz. the previous recognition of the independence of Poland. 'The Poles, who display so much caution,' he immediately replied, 'who ask for so many guarantees before they declare themselves, are egotists, whom the love of their country has not inflamed. My greatness does not depend on the help of a few thousand Poles. It is for them to profit by the present circumstances: *it is not for me to take the first step.* Let them show a firm resolution to render themselves independent; let them engage to support the king who should be given to them, *and then I shall see what I can do.* . . . Make them feel that I am not come to beg a throne for one of my relatives; I have thrones enough for my family!' What was it that they asked for, in exchange for the generous blood that they were ready to shed for him? A word; and in the very legitimate fear which they experienced of seeing their country sacrificed afresh, after so many successive disastrous and sterile immolations, he feigned only to perceive selfish calculations; he only found in it a pretext for vain accusations of pride, or even for undignified abuse. In the same way he pretended only to regard the unexpected opposition of Kosciusko as an *act of folly.* He had felt so sure of obtaining the adhesion of this great citizen by the mere prospect of the personal advantages which the co-operation of the Emperor seemed to promise him, that he published

in the *Moniteur* a false proclamation of Kosciusko, inviting his fellow-citizens to range themselves under the banner of the invincible Napoleon; but this fraud was immediately exposed by Kosciusko himself, and Napoleon's anger was so much the warmer that he was little prepared for such a disappointment.

From this moment there was a division among the leaders of the Polish nation, some, such as Joseph Poniatowski and Zajonchek, Wybicki and Dombrowski, still continuing to trust him, in spite of his reticence; others—but they were far less numerous—preferring abstention till he had consented to give them the guarantee that they demanded. A third party, at the head of which was Prince Adam Czartoryski, one of the most active of Alexander's young counsellors, persisted in hoping for the regeneration of Poland from the good will of the Czar. This illusion was perhaps as great as the other, but, in the desperate situation in which the Polish patriots were then placed, they could scarcely live except by illusions. They were not, moreover, wrong in reckoning on Alexander's generosity; they were only mistaken in attributing to him more power than he possessed. Alexander was not unworthy of the confidence he inspired. His character blended Byzantine subtlety with really lofty sentiments; but, notwithstanding his power, he could not with impunity have touched the integrity of the empire.

One of the nobles who rallied round the Czar—Count Michael Oginski—very clearly expressed the feeling of mistrust which estranged a number of the Poles from Napoleon; and there is really very little to add to what he wrote on this point. In explanation of the motives which had guided his conduct, he said, in a memoir addressed in 1811 to the Emperor Alexander: 'For the re-establishment of an independent country, it would be necessary to suppose that Napoleon possessed those liberal views, that moderation, disinterestedness, and generosity of character which are by no means compatible with his eagerness to conquer, with his urgency to weaken, to divide and to destroy all the states of Europe, with his indifference to the

welfare and tranquillity of the nations. . . . And how can we imagine that this favourite of fortune, who believes himself sent from God to rule the affairs of the whole world, that this overreaching man, who has destroyed so many thrones, who has raised up some few others only to strengthen his own grandeur; who changes his resolutions and projects as quickly as he conceives them; who has never troubled himself about the happiness of men, and who only values them so far as they offer him their arms for the execution of his designs:—how can we suppose, I say, that this extraordinary man, who cares nothing for the unfortunate lot of Europe which he has thrown into confusion, should care about the sad position of the Poles, and that he should wish to re-establish their country by insuring them a free and independent government?'[1]

Nothing could be more just or more striking than these reflections; nothing more justified by the subsequent conduct of Napoleon towards the Poles. Whatever may be said in his excuse—and even admitting that the hesitations of some among them may have released him from his responsibility—it is not the less true that he knowingly deceived that part of the nation who persisted in trusting him to the end, unless it be maintained that the annexation of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw to the kingdom of Saxony was a sufficient compensation for the levies of men and the requisitions which from this time he did not cease to make in Poland. Between Napoleon and the Poles, who gave themselves to him, there was henceforth a tacit compact, of which the condition was a blind and absolute devotion on their side, and on his the restoration of their country. Till the end of his reign he contrived to preserve their confidence by half promises and half measures and expressions of double meaning, which gave almost equal satisfaction to the Poles and to their enemies.

'I could not,' wrote Prince Czartoryski, in 1809, 'help being astonished at the art with which Napoleon propagated, and accredited at the same time, the most contrary conjectures and opinions. It is certain that though he wrote

[1] *Mémoires du Comte Oginski*, vol. iii.

despatches and made speeches that ought to have raised the indignation of the Poles, or driven them to despair, he nevertheless succeeded in spreading among us the conviction that not only had he the interest of Poland at heart, but that he had a particular feeling of affection for our nation. . . . In order to awaken enthusiasm, he had only to publish a newspaper article, or send to Warsaw one of his Polish *aides-de-camp*, who, received into every society, repeated Napoleon's words, or related some anecdote which touched the patriots. *We lived on that for several months, and then another emissary came to raise our spirits.*'[1]

What would have happened if the whole of Poland had followed the example of these credulous men, who, in spite of so many bitter deceptions, gave him their lives with such magnificent prodigality from Somo-Sierra to Leipsic? It is scarcely possible that it would have changed the fate either of Europe or of the Poles themselves. He would not the less have abandoned them at Tilsit, to extend his hand to the powerful emperor, who brought to his aid what he appreciated the most in the world, a strongly-organised despotic government; to rid Europe of the obnoxious spectacle of a free and independent power, he would not the less have deceived them by half measures and promises which he always eluded. This success, in short, would in no wise have hindered him from committing a single one of the faults which caused his ruin; but we tremble to think of the difficulties which the heroism of a fanaticised nation would have added to the struggle. Despairing patriotism easily becomes illuminism, especially among a people whose character is at once mystical and chivalrous. In spite of Napoleon's numberless deceptions, of which the Poles were the victims, we have seen, in our own time, their poets and their thinkers institute in honour of his memory a kind of worship, under the name of *Messianism*. This singular circumstance plainly indicates how dangerous such an arm might have become, wielded by such hands; and, instead of blaming the patriots who refused to trust

[1] Correspondence of Alexander I. with Prince Czartoryski, published by Ch. de Mazade.

blindly in him, we ought rather to say that they have deserved well of Europe and of civilisation. Napoleon could have liberated Poland, and there was one of the finest chances of true greatness that his marvellous fortune offered him; but he could only do it on condition that he changed his system, and those who looked for such a miraculous conversion were bound to require from him a guarantee of his intentions.

Very different were his views at the opening of this new campaign. 'To conquer the sea by land' was the theme of all his letters; and by the side of this undefined programme, which was suited admirably to the restlessness and the adventurous tendencies of his genius, the patient and delicate task of re-establishing Poland could only appear a troublesome diversion. From his youth he had had a strong passion for grand enterprises that offered an unlimited perspective to his ambition; but even in Egypt, where he had shown his predilection for those vast utopias, the evident insufficiency of his resources had forced him to fall back upon the second plan. Now that he had reached the climax of his power through a thousand prodigies, he no longer believed that anything was impossible, and he yielded without resistance to the tyranny which these gigantic and chimerical plans exercised over his imagination. When he marched against Russia, he had no longer as formerly a settled and definite aim; he had in view, as a first result, the complete submission of Europe; but beyond that, he dreamed of something more, and that was the empire of the world.

His genius, so eminently calculating and positive, fully displayed itself in the working of the powerful means of action which insured him the government of so vast an empire. Thanks to the vote of the Senate, which had allowed him to draw the conscripts of 1807,[1] he had now,

[1] 'It is evident,' said Regnault de Saint-Jean d'Angély, when he asked the Senate for these 80,000 conscripts, 'that in the interest of the people *it is better to send more brave men to the combat, for it will cost the fewer brave men to obtain victory*.'—*Moniteur* of December 5, 1806.

either in France, or in the countries under his domination, nearly six hundred thousand men under his orders: with this number, which then seemed almost inexhaustible, he had easily been able to fill up the ranks in his army, and even to increase the effective. In order to remedy the evils which arose from the distance, and at the same time to utilise the troops that were as yet inexperienced, he had transported his depots of conscripts, which had hitherto remained on the Rhine, to places on the Elbe and the Oder. Here these young soldiers took the place of troops that were more useful on the field of battle; they sufficed for a garrison, and employed their leisure hours in military exercises; they served to maintain our communications, and they were in Napoleon's reach in case of danger. He had reinforced his cavalry, and had remounted it in the great parks created by Frederick and kept up by his successor with a care which had made the Prussian cavalry the finest in Europe. He had, moreover, organised in all the places through which his army passed—at Erfurt, at Magdeburg, at Spandau, at Cüstrin—great stores of provisions and ammunition of every kind. His basis of operations was no longer France, but Prussia. He had transformed the whole of this country into a sort of great arsenal. The old administration was maintained under the direction of M. Daru; they still continued to gather the ordinary taxes, together with our contributions of war; and very soon all the resources of the kingdom were employed for the support of our army. The requisitions which were then levied on the conquered provinces (Prussia, Hesse, Hanover, Brunswick, and the Hanseatic towns), either in money, in provisions, or in the shape of the seizure of English merchandise, cannot be estimated at less than four hundred millions.

The army that was to be maintained by these enormous tributes amounted to more than three hundred thousand men, when all the corps on march had effected their junction. But this army, however powerful and alarming it still was, had already lost its former character, and no longer possessed more than a portion of those rare qualities which had constituted its force and its originality. Military writers

have pointed out in a special manner the mischief which afterwards befell from the too great extension of the regiments and the dispersion of the battalions. The evil to which I allude was far graver and more profound; one which impaired the very constitution of the army. If there is an instructive lesson in history, it is the spectacle of this despotism, founded wholly on military force, gradually weakening and ruining without being aware of it, and in some measure by the sole vice of its own development, the admirable instrument to which it owes all. It would be a serious omission not to notice the progress of this slow but continuous perversion of our military institutions, for it became more apparent as the empire extended, and it was not long before the first effects were to be felt. Bonaparte had, from his very beginning, changed the spirit of the army by substituting dreams of glory, of ambition, of riches, for patriotic motives. This change was far from being immaterial, but its consequences were not immediately perceived, for passion for conquest had at first appeared advantageously to replace the old revolutionary enthusiasm. After his elevation to the supreme power, he had gone still further. He had endeavoured to separate the army from the nation, to withdraw it from the influence of civilians, to create for it independent resources, a special treasury, wealthy endowments, which opened up a new career to its ambitious chiefs. They were no longer the soldiers of the country, but the soldiers of the Emperor; they were the instruments of his fortune, and not the defenders of the people. He went a step farther at the time of the campaigns of Austerlitz and Jena, by introducing into our army, hitherto so compact, elements taken from the conquered countries.

In this we have strong evidence that his political errors betrayed his military genius, for if it is certain that the enormous size of the new empire and the colossal enterprises of its chief rendered this additional military force indispensable for the maintenance of exhausted France, it is more certain still that the admission into our ranks of these auxiliary corps, which could only serve reluctantly, dealt a fatal blow to the discipline, ardour, and unity of our

army. The national sentiment, the great homogeneity of thought and action, which had made our army a living and harmonious whole that nothing seemed able to break up, was first weakened, and by degrees lost in this cosmopolitan mass, who had neither our character, our manners and customs, nor our passions, and who did not even speak our language. The foreign contingent of the army which marched against Russia towards the end of the year 1806 rose to nearly a hundred thousand men. There were Italians, Swiss, Dutch, Würtembergers, Bavarians, Hessians, Saxons, Poles; there were even Prussians. 'His majesty,' said Napoleon, in his forty-second bulletin, 'has ordered a regiment to be formed in the Prussian States beyond the Elbe, which will meet in Münster.' He very quickly recognised the strange consequences to which this system would one day lead; but he found it too convenient to change. 'The Swiss regiments,' he wrote to Fouché, the 20th of February 1807, 'are enlisting Prussian prisoners, so that *I might have the extraordinary policy of having France protected by my enemies.*' Still, however extraordinary this system was, he nevertheless persisted in it, and on this side, as well as on so many others, this great parody of the Roman empire contained from its origin all the defects which Rome only knew towards her decline, and which she only submitted to with reluctance in order to delay the hour of her inevitable downfall. Napoleon determined to have even Spaniards in his army. The 15th of December he ordered Talleyrand to negotiate with King Charles IV. for the despatch of an auxiliary corps of fifteen thousand men, and in order to take them as far as possible from their country, he confided to them the defence of Hamburg and the other Hanseatic towns.[1]

His aim, in this circumstance, was not so much to obtain a few more regiments as to weaken and disarm Spain, on which he was beginning to build projects which, though as yet somewhat indefinite, were alarming for the future of the country. For a long time weary of a burdensome alliance, overwhelmed with humiliations, ruined by our extortions,

[1] Napoleon to Talleyrand, December 15, 1806.

and treated as a conquered country, whose provinces were ceded without even consulting her, Spain had seen in the war with Prussia an opportunity of assuming towards Napoleon, if not a hostile, at any rate an independent attitude. A proclamation of the Prince of the Peace had called the Spaniards to arms, to defend the liberty of their country against an enemy whom he did not name;[1] but after the news of the victory of Jena the customary silence had again reigned, and their submission had become the more absolute as the revolt had been more imminent. Spain was glad to gain pardon for this feeble velleity by the despatch of a contingent of fifteen thousand men. She never suspected that this pledge of docility, instead of appeasing her imperious ally, was only a prelude to the sacrifices which he was about to impose upon her.

Napoleon, who was always ready to support the effort of his armies by that of diplomacy, when the time for negotiations was passed, had seen his offers rejected by Austria. That power had been too cruelly wounded to be accessible to such tardy advances. Since she could not be gained, she had to be kept in awe. The army of the viceroy was concentrated in Friuli, under the orders of Masséna, combining with Marmont's corps which occupied Dalmatia. These troops formed a total of seventy-five thousand men, all ready to march into the valley of the Danube. They sufficed provisionally to neutralise Austria. Our diplomacy had been more successful with the Porte. So great is the power of interests and situations that, in spite of the remembrance of the violent and disloyal rupture which had given Egypt to us, an unhoped-for reconciliation had just been effected between France and Turkey. Napoleon, who fully understood the value of a diversion created for our benefit against the Russians, had endeavoured to mislead and encourage the Sultan Selim. He reminded him of the ancient ties which united the two countries, of their community of interests, and of the uninterrupted march of Russian invasions towards Constantinople. Even

[1] Dated October 5. See Toreno, *Histoire de le révolution d'Espagne*, vol. i.

before the Porte had broken with Russia, he solemnly engaged in all his manifestoes to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman empire. As early as the month of June 1806, while he was negotiating with M. d'Oubril a treaty of peace between France and Russia, he urged Selim to declare himself against Alexander, by changing on his own authority the hospodars of Wallachia and Moldavia, whom the Sultan could only name in concert with the Czar.[1] In order to hasten this event, he accredited to the Divan a skilful, active, and devoted agent, whose mission may be summed up in a single word—to draw Turkey into the war.

The hatred, rivalry, and divisions of every kind, which had for so long existed between the Porte and Russia, rendered Sebastiani's task comparatively light; it was facilitated, too, by the character of Selim, who was a weak and credulous man, of excellent intentions but perfectly incapable of following a regular system. Sebastiani employed by turns promises and intimidation. He threatened him with our army of Dalmatia, which was in close contact with Montenegro, Albania, and the most restless populations of the Turkish empire. Under the influence of these solicitations, Selim expelled the two hospodars on the 30th of August 1806. It was then that Constantinople learned that the Czar had refused to ratify the treaty of peace signed at Paris by D'Oubril. Sebastiani became more urgent. He summoned the Sultan to choose at once between the enmity of France and that of Russia.[2] Selim, intimidated, forbade the Russian vessels access to the Bosphorus; then soon after, still more alarmed by the threats of the representatives of England and Russia, he re-established in Wallachia and Moldavia the two hospodars whom he had dismissed, without however breaking with France. But it was already too late to recede; a Russian army under the command of General Michelson had entered the Principalities, and Turkey found herself irrevocably engaged in a perilous war, for the glory of an ally

[1] Napoleon to the Sultan Selim, June 20, 1806.
[2] Sebastiani's note, dated September 16, 1806.

whose name could only remind her of the bitterest deceptions, and of whose doubtful fidelity she was about to have a fresh experience.

Napoleon saw with a transport of joy the diversion that served his purposes so well. 'Take courage,' he wrote to Selim, on the 11th of November, '*the destinies have promised that your empire shall last; I have a mission to save it, and I will share with you my victories!*'[1] On the 1st of December following he renewed these assurances in the most flattering terms, and ordered Sebastiani to sign with the Sultan a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, by which he guaranteed to the Porte *the integrity of her provinces of Moldavia, Wallachia, and Servia, and engaged only to make peace with Russia in connection with her.*[2] In order to make these engagements appear still more irrevocable, he recorded them in his bulletins and in his messages to the Senate, dwelling particularly on the disgrace it would be to France if we were to abandon Turkey, and the danger that would result for 'civilised Europe.' In one of his manifestoes, addressed to the Senate, he wrote: 'If the Greek tiara were triumphant from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, we should see in our days our provinces attacked by a cloud of fanatics and barbarians. Our culpable indifference would rightly provoke the complaints of posterity, and we should justly deserve the opprobrium of history' (January 20, 1807). He very soon showed how he took this reprobation of history and posterity into account.

He announced to this assembly at the same time that the emperor of Persia was about to send his troops into the Caucasus, and he informed them of the entrance of Saxony into the Confederation of the Rhine. Such were in fact the new allies that Napoleon had gained, or rather had enchained to his cause. With regard to Persia, the announcement was somewhat premature. His agent, M. Amédée Jaubert, who had arrived at Teheran in June 1806, after innumerable perils, had only sent reports of

[1] Correspondence, *loc. cit.*
[2] Napoleon to Sebastiani, December 1, 1806.

propositions, and the treaty was not signed till May 1807. But as no one could verify the fact, and as the name of Persia figured well on the programme, it was left to bear witness to our extensive influence.

Against this formidable league, which united under the same standard so many different nations, Russia appeared little able to sustain a contest. Prussia, placed *hors de combat*, could only furnish about twenty thousand men, who had escaped Murat's pursuit; England had made promises that she was in no hurry to fulfil, occupied as she was in seizing the Spanish and Dutch colonies; and Sweden, which was too weak to give her any efficacious support, confined herself to defending Stralsund with some fifteen thousand men. After deducting Michelson's corps, which was engaged in Moldavia, and the troops which could only reach the frontier much later, Russia could only meet us on the Vistula with an army of about twenty thousand men. Lestocq's twenty thousand Prussians, ranged in echelons from Dantzic to Thorn, were keeping watch over the river; Bennigsen had concentrated a corps of sixty thousand men in the neighbourhood of Warsaw; and a third corps, amounting to forty thousand men, and commanded by Buxhœwden, was advancing by forced marches to join Bennigsen.[1] The command of all these united forces was to be given to Kamenski, an old man of eighty, who had neither the energy nor the activity of mind and body that such a task required.

The French army had already marched into Poland, and, as early as the 4th of November, Davoust had occupied Posen. The advanced corps which threatened the Vistula, under the orders of Davoust, Lannes, Augereau, and Murat, may be estimated at ninety thousand men. They were closely followed by another army, nearly equal in number, commanded by Soult, Ney, Bernadotte, and Bessières.

[1] Approximate valuation, made by comparing the estimates of Plotho, Hœpfner, Danilewski and Robert Wilson. I am indebted to a distinguished military writer, M. Guillaume Rumpf, for a great deal of valuable information on German works and documents relating to the campaigns of 1806-1807, and not translated into French.

Mortier's corps was left behind in Mecklenburg, to guard the coast from Hamburg to Stettin. In Silesia Jérôme's corps was charged, under the direction of Vandamme, to besiege the places which still held out in this province. On our approach, Bennigsen did not feel that he could with his forces alone defend so extensive a line as the Vistula against such a large army; for if the passage of the river was forced at any one point, his scattered troops would be placed in imminent peril. He accordingly abandoned to us, not only Warsaw but the intrenched camp of Praga, and fell back in the direction of Pultusk, to meet the *corps d'armée* which Buxhœwden was bringing up. This retrograde movement made us masters of the Vistula. Ney took Thorn from Lestocq's Prussians, and established himself there with Bernadotte's corps and Bessières' cavalry, which formed our left. Soult and Augereau, who composed our centre, crossed the river from Plock to Zakroczim, and our right, comprising the corps of Lannes, Murat, and Davoust, extended along the Bug and Narew, from Sierock to the point at which these two rivers fall into the Vistula.

Such was the respective situation of the two armies towards the 20th of December. Our cantonments extended in echelons from Thorn to Warsaw, a distance of about forty leagues. Lestocq's Prussians had remained upon the Drevenz, near Thorn. The Russian troops, reinforced by Buxhœwden, and placed under the orders of Kamenski, had suspended their retreat, in order to intrench themselves in the angle which is formed, a little north of Warsaw, by the Wkra, the Narew, and the Bug, as they all pour into the Vistula.

The ground, which is naturally swampy on account of the vicinity of these great rivers, had moreover been soaked by rains, and was rendered almost impracticable by the unusual mildness of the season. Napoleon said that 'he had discovered a fifth element in Poland, which was *mud*.' He felt all the inconvenience of a renewal of hostilities under such conditions. He desired and he was able to take up his winter quarters at Warsaw. It was in order to facilitate this that he had insisted on the conclusion of an

armistice; and although his offer had been rejected, it only depended on himself to maintain his position. But the close proximity of a Russian army, though it offered little danger, behind the natural intrenchment which penetrated into the very middle of his cantonments, soon appeared to him a sort of permanent insult, which he could not tolerate; and he resolved to give his army no rest till he had either driven back or dispersed the Russians. He even flattered himself that he could beat them at the very opening of the campaign. 'It is possible,' he wrote to Clarke, on the 18th of December, 'that within a week there may be an affair which will finish the campaign.'

In order to attain this end, he ordered a bridge to be constructed over the Narew, below the point where this river joins the Wkra. On the 20th of December, having arrived at Warsaw in the night in order to avoid the ovations of the Poles, he superintended this work in person. When it was finished, all his *corps d'armée* received orders simultaneously to march against the scattered posts of the Prusso-Russian army. While he is about to cross the Narew, in order to assail the enemy in front with his guard, his reserve and the corps of Davoust and Lannes, his lieutenants Augereau and Soult, marching beyond the Wkra, were to manœuvre on the flank of the Russians in order to turn them; and Ney, supported by Bernadotte, was to drive the Prussians northwards, at the same time that he threatened the line of retreat of their allies. During the night of the 22d and 23d of December, the Emperor quitted Warsaw. At nine o'clock in the morning he crossed the Narew, and in the evening of the same day he threw a bridge of boats across the Wkra, between Okunin and Pomichowo, under the fire of the enemy. Deceived by false demonstrations, the Russians failed to prevent the passage. They were immediately attacked in their position at Czarnowo. Night came on, but the combat was not suspended. They fought by the light of the moon. The Russians were driven from their posts, after a vigorous resistance which cost them two thousand men. They retired to Nasielks, where they were beaten afresh on the

morrow. Only one of their divisions had taken part in these two battles, and nevertheless the situation of their army was already compromised. Augereau had crossed the Wkra at Kolozomb after a brilliant fight. He was marching towards Nowemiasto on the flank of the Russians; Soult was advancing parallel from Sochoczyn, and Bernadotte and Ney, who had left Thorn, were making for Biezun and Soldau.

After this sudden irruption, which he had not been able to prevent, old Kamenski, whose head was weakened by age, appeared to have completely lost his reason.[1] His lieutenants, Bennigsen and Buxhœwden, were obliged to provide for the safety of the army. They both agreed to march the bulk of their troops to Pultusk, where they hoped to rally those of their divisions which had remained between the Bug and the Narew. Meanwhile their ardent adversary, believing that their principal retreat would be by Golymin, rushed with his cavalry to Ciechanow, in order to attack them in flank during their march. He sent the corps of Davoust, Augereau, and Murat, to Golymin, and only marched Lannes' corps to Pultusk. To Soult he reserved the honour of striking what he considered the decisive blow of the campaign. He accordingly ordered him to march from Ciechanow to Makow, a town situated in the rear of the Russian army, where he would be able to cut to pieces the flying remnants of the enemy and gather the fruits of victory.

This fine plan was in reality only based upon conjectures that were not realised. Napoleon's mistake did not arise from any failing of his genius, nor from any fault of his generals, but from the violence that he did to the nature of things by commencing such extensive operations at such a season and on such ground. Not only did his artillery and equipages stick so fast in the mud that his march was im-

[1] Prince Eugène of Würtemberg mentions several signs of this in his *Mémoires*. His evidence is confirmed by that of Robert Wilson, who served in these campaigns as a volunteer in the Russian army, and who wrote an account of them full of very curious and mostly correct information. 'Brief remarks, etc., or a sketch of the campaigns in Poland, 1806-1807.'

peded, but even his cavalry became almost useless, and it was impossible for him to reconnoitre sufficiently to be thoroughly acquainted with the enemy's movements. As he could make no close observation of facts, he could only act according to suppositions. On the 26th of December, while Napoleon with very superior forces was attacking the village of Golymin, where only one division supported by a few regiments was intrenched, Lannes fell in with the greater part of Bennigsen's *corps d'armée* at Pultusk. Although he had scarcely twenty-six thousand men, including Gudin's division, to resist about forty thousand, Lannes attacked the enemy's line with his customary intrepidity and made it give way. He directed his principal effort on the Russian left, in the hope of taking Pultusk and the passage of the Narew, but he met with a desperate resistance at all points, and the Russian artillery, very superior to ours, a part of which had been left on the road, made terrible havoc in our ranks. Lannes persisted till evening in furiously attacking Bennigsen, but without success; he did not make him fall back at any one point, and the bloody combat finished without either of the armies having obtained a decisive advantage.[1] At Golymin the issue of the battle had been almost the same, though rather more favourable to our forces. Covered by woods and swamps that were almost unapproachable, Gallitzin's division, with the regiments that supported it, kept Augereau's and Davoust's corps and Murat's cavalry in check for several hours. In the end it was obliged to yield and effect its retreat; but this combat was so indecisive that, from Napoleon's own avowal, the resistance lasted till 11 o'clock at night.[2] The same day, December 26th, fifteen leagues off, Ney attacked Lestocq's Prussians at Soldau, and finally remained master of the town, which was taken and retaken several times; but he paid very dearly for his victory.

[1] In his report, dated from Rozan, December 15-26, Bennigsen plainly claims the victory, and states that no attempt was made to pursue him. He asserts that he only retreated because he had neither forage nor provisions. This is a very exaggerated account.

[2] Forty-seventh bulletin.

Thus, in spite of the excellence of Napoleon's plan, victory had been at least indecisive in one point, and very incomplete at two others. Moreover, two of his *corps d'armée* had taken no part in the battle. Soult's, which was to cut off the retreat from the Russians at Makow, had been forced to stop at Ciechanow in consequence of the bad state of the roads, and even if he had reached Makow, he would have found a part of Buxhœwden's army ready to resist him there. As for Bernadotte's corps, they had marched in the direction of Biezun without meeting any one. These mistakes, the questionable success, and the want of precision and concert in the execution of the plan, were in truth attributable to the season and the nature of the ground, which rendered our manœuvres so slow and difficult. But Napoleon had been aware of these obstacles from the time of his arrival in Poland. They existed, too, for our enemies as well as for ourselves, but he showed an increasing tendency never to take them into account in his calculations, and it is precisely for this reason that it is important to mark the growth of the propensity. He thought he had explained everything, when he wrote in his bulletin 'that but for the horrible mud, caused by the rains and the thaw, not a single man would have escaped.' He, a captain so skilful in obtaining the greatest possible advantage from ground, who had so often ridiculed fine plans on paper, thought this justification quite plausible and acceptable, as if it had been impossible for him to foresee a temperature that had lasted for more than a month.

But though the victory of this short campaign was far from brilliant, especially when compared with our former triumphs, it was nevertheless ours, since the Russian army were forced to evacuate their positions and abandon us a part of their artillery and baggage, which it was impossible to transport across the bogs. They left eighty guns in our hands. They had lost from ten to twelve thousand men killed or taken prisoners.[1] The losses on our side had

[1] Fezensac says *twenty thousand*, but Napoleon, who was not in the habit of underrating the losses of his enemy, says twelve thousand. Forty-seventh bulletin.

been about as great. Napoleon, who could not think of pursuing the enemy on ground in which, to use an expression of one of his officers,[1] he saw *his battalions disappear*, resolved to take up his winter quarters and wait for a milder season. He accordingly distributed his *corps d'armée* in cantonments situated from ten to fifteen leagues from the Vistula. Though placed near enough to support each other, they were still dispersed over a distance that was unquestionably too extensive, for from Warsaw where Lannes' corps was, to Elbing where Bernadotte was encamped, it is not less than fifty leagues. His other generals occupied the intermediate ground between these two extreme points. Ney was cantoned near Neidenburg, Soult in the neighbourhood of Golymin, Davoust at Pultusk, Augereau close to Zakroczim. Marshal Lefebvre was charged to keep watch over Dantzic with a corps of fifteen thousand men, till he could commence the siege of that place. Another corps invested Graudenz. Napoleon himself remained at Warsaw with his guard. From thence he superintended the thousand arrangements that were necessary for the maintenance of this immense army: the despatch of provisions, the making of clothes, the supplies, the establishment of large hospitals—a frightful programme of future battles. But these numerous affairs too often amounted to orders that were never executed, because it was impossible that they could be, seeing the disproportion of the enterprise to the precarious resources of the country. Our soldiers, reduced to dig up the provisions which the poor peasant Poles had buried, lived badly. The miserable quality of their food, added to the insalubrity of a damp climate, gave rise to several diseases, from which the chiefs themselves did not escape; Lannes, Murat, and Augereau were seriously attacked; in short, the echo of the complaints of the army reached Paris, and spread so much alarm, that Napoleon felt obliged to dissipate it by contradicting the reports in the *Moniteur*.[2]

The only compensation for so many evils was the fate

[1] Jomini.

[2] Napoleon to Fouché, January 18, 1807.

of the principal towns in Silesia, which succumbed after a more honourable resistance than the other Prussian fortresses had offered. Glogau had capitulated on the 2d of December; Breslau surrendered to Vandamme on the 8th of January, when the water frozen in the moats placed his weak garrison at the mercy of an assault; Schweidnitz soon after experienced the same fate.

While Napoleon was making arrangements for establishing himself peaceably in his winter quarters, the Russian army, after having stolen out of his sight by a long and skilful march, was preparing to return and attack him. Driven back upon Ostrolenka, after the battles of Golymin and Pultusk, the Russian generals had succeeded in joining each other near Novgorod. Here a council of war was held, in which Bennigsen warmly insisted on an immediate renewal of hostilities. This general, who, without great military talent, possessed a great deal of daring and perseverance, believed that by indomitable energy they could successfully match the strategical superiority of their terrible adversary. He was a patriot in his own way, and had obtained a great authority over the soldiers. On several occasions in his life, and especially in the famous tragedy which had put an end to the reign and life of Paul I., he had displayed extraordinary strength of character. Without boasting of the well-known part that he had played in that memorable night, he often alluded to it, with the cool and haughty assurance of a man who equally despised bravado and repentance. His firm attitude at Pultusk had pointed him out as the commander of the army, and very soon afterwards he received orders to succeed Kamenski, and execute the plan that he had conceived. Though he did not deceive himself with regard to the difficulties arising from the bad season, he rightly judged them to be less for his soldiers than for ours, who were not accustomed to such a climate, and he instinctively felt that if we were seeking to avoid a battle, there was an advantage for him in offering it. He accordingly resolved to profit by the extensive lengthening out of our cantonments, in order to surprise, if he could, the two *corps d'armée* which formed

their extreme end towards Northern Prussia, and in any case to drive them back by disengaging at one stroke the towns of Dantzic and Graudenz. The imprudent dispersion of Ney's corps at Neidenburg, from whence detachments had been sent as far as Königsberg to procure provisions for the famished troops,[1] and the somewhat hazardous situation of Bernadotte at Elbing, offered Bennigsen a well-grounded hope of cutting off and beating these two isolated corps before the rest of the army could come to their assistance. Whatever may be said, in fact, to justify the lengthening out of Napoleon's positions, it is certain that it was too great, and extremely perilous before an army of whose movements and precise situation he was ignorant.

This imprudence, however, was not attended with the unfortunate consequences that might have been feared. So admirable was Napoleon's power of divination in affairs of war, that before he had suspected anything of Bennigsen's plan he had sent Jomini to Ney's camp to censure the marshal for his rashness in advancing towards Königsberg, and to recall him to his cantonments at Neidenburg. 'Come back slowly,' wrote Berthier to him, in the Emperor's name, '*it is the first step of a retrograde march that the Emperor is making*' (January 18, 1807).[2] Bennigsen, impressed with the necessity of concealing his march, had disappeared behind a vast curtain of impenetrable forests; he had gone far out of his way in the neighbourhood of Lake Spirding, then he had advanced by Arys, Rhein, and Bischoffstein, reckoning on surprising our cantonments that were still confident in their security, especially those of Bernadotte, who was the most exposed after Ney commenced his retrograde movement. Ney had not yet completed this movement when the Russians appeared near Heilsberg (January 22, 1807), and his last detachments were obliged to cut a passage in order to join their *corps*

[1] See Fezensac, Jomini, and Mathieu Dumas, *Précis des événements militaires*, vol. xviii.

[2] Fezensac, *Souvenirs* in the *Mémorial du dépôt de la guerre*, vol. viii., Appendix.

d'armée. But Bennigsen, who arrived with his troops harassed by long marches over impracticable ground and in such a rigorous season, found himself unable to effect his operations with the harmony and rapidity that were more than ever necessary. At the moment of reaping the fruit of so skilfully conceived a plan, he allowed it to slip from his hands. Instead of cutting the whole or a part of Ney's corps, he was only able to drive them back upon their line of retreat. Bernadotte, who was quickly warned by his fellow-officer of the danger that threatened him, fell back with all haste in the same direction, and at Mohrungen overthrew the Russian advance-guard, which tried to stop his passage. He lost his baggage, but he was able to effect his retreat upon Strasburg, joining hands with Ney who was at Gilgenburg (January 25th).

Napoleon did not know the whole of these events till the 27th of January. He at once understood their importance, and instead of endeavouring to impede the march of the Russians towards the Lower Vistula, he resolved to do everything to lead them on farther and farther in Bernadotte's steps, while he himself would move on their rear according to his constant method. He accordingly hastened to break up his cantonments. He led his army on Willemberg, the point from which he intended to attack the extreme left of the Russians, in order to turn them quickly and force them on to the Vistula; or if they perceived his project in time, to drive them back in the opposite direction beyond the Niemen. At Warsaw he left Lannes' corps to fight the two divisions which Bennigsen had sent upon the Narew; then, in order to draw the Russians towards the Vistula, he sent instructions to Bernadotte to retire gradually before them in the direction of Thorn.[1] He did not really flatter himself that he should cut off the whole of the

[1] According to Robert Wilson, who asserts that Bennigsen gave him the original copy of this order, Napoleon, though he informed Bernadotte of his intention to cut off the Russian army, did not order him to fall back upon Thorn, but 'to resist the enemy with the vigour which he had the right to expect from the military experience of the marshal,' which amounts to the same thing.

Russian army, but he thought he was certain of surprising a corps of 'from fifteen to twenty thousand men,' and he sent to Clarke, to Mortier, and Lefebvre, who were at Berlin, at Stralsund, and Thorn, to hold themselves ready to take advantage of this possible event.[1] The cold having made the ground quite firm, the roads had again become practicable. We could no longer attribute our failures to the mud of Poland. Napoleon had so little doubt of the success of this new campaign, that he announced in all his letters *that he was about to drive the Russians beyond the Niemen.*[2] He even went so far as to predict this result in the proclamation which he addressed to his army on the 30th of January.

'The Russians,' he said, 'are led away by the *Fatality* which constantly misleads the counsels of our enemies. They enter Turkey and declare war on the Porte at the very moment we arrive on their frontiers. They break up their winter quarters, and come and disturb their conquerors, only to experience fresh defeats. Since it is so, let us quit a repose that would injure our reputation; *let them fly dismayed before our eagles beyond the Niemen!* We shall spend the rest of our winter in the fine provinces of old Prussia, and they will not be able to attribute *their misfortunes* to any other than themselves!'

To speak thus as a man of destiny was no doubt a powerful means of working upon the imagination, but a great general ought to anticipate everything, even the possibility of a reverse. It is better for him not to make engagements that he may not be able to keep, for in case of failure the effect that he sought to produce will turn against himself; and the more men's minds have been excited by his predictions, the greater will be the depression when they see that they are not fulfilled. As early as the 28th of January, Bennigsen had stopped his march, either because he felt it would be imprudent to advance farther, or because he wished to give some repose to his tired soldiers. On the 30th of January he began to sus-

[1] Napoleon to Clarke, January 27; to Lefebvre, January 28, 1807.
[2] *Correspondance* from January 27 to February 1, 1807.

pect that the French intended to operate on his left. The 1st of February he was near Allenstein, when the despatch was brought him which Napoleon had sent to Bernadotte, and which had been intercepted by the Cossacks. Fully enlightened on the danger of his position, he immediately resolved to retire in the direction of Königsberg. At Jonkowo he stopped us for a day, in order to maintain his communications with Lestocq's Prussians, who were still at Osterode in a very hazardous position (February 3d). He stole away during the night, and the following days he checked us afresh, first at Hott, and then at Landsberg, with remarkable firmness, by means of strong rear-guards which covered the march of his army. At his extreme right the Prussians, separated from him by the Passarge, and closely followed by Ney, still remained very exposed. Forestalled by this marshal at Deppen, where they hoped to cross the river, they had to sacrifice a part of their *corps d'armée* at Liebstadt, in order to be able to pass it at Spanden.

On the 7th of February 1807, Bennigsen, still pursued by Napoleon, arrived at Preuss-Eylau. Moved by the complaints of his soldiers, who wanted to fight, tired of keeping upon the defensive, the advantage of which he did not fully understand, and finding the position favourable for his army, he resolved to give us battle there. He was so closely pursued, owing to the rapidity of our movements, that the first shock between the two armies took place that same day. The Russians had established themselves behind Eylau; the town and its approaches were only occupied by their rear-guard, commanded by Barclay de Tolly. Soult drove them out after a bloody combat, in which the town was several times taken and retaken, and our centre was lodged in it for the night.

The next day, the 8th of February, the rising sun showed the position of the two armies. That of the Russians was much nearer to the town than Napoleon had at first supposed. Deceived by a reconnaissance, imperfectly made by Murat, and confirmed in his suppositions by the affairs of the preceding days, the Emperor believed the Russians

to be, if not in full retreat, at least encamped much farther off. Soult's *corps d'armée* awoke almost under the fire of their cannon. Very early in the morning Napoleon came up to our line and drew up his army in battle-array. In the centre of our position was a cemetery in which his guard was established, and close by rose the church of Eylau, situated like the town upon a slight eminence. The ground around us, strewed with corpses, everywhere bore traces of the fight of the day before. In front extended the field of battle. A plain, covered with frozen snow, inclined downwards from our positions of Eylau and Rothenen to the opposite extremity, where it rose again after having described some slight undulations. So thick was the ice that covered the ground, that part of the day the soldiers fought upon lakes of which they did not even suspect the existence. The sky was dull and gloomy: the north wind drove before it whirlwinds of snow, and from this sombre background stood out in relief dark masses of the Russian army, drawn up under the heights, from Saussgarten to Schmoditten, three lines deep. They remained there motionless, alternately deployed in order of battle, or closely pressed in columns of attack, behind a rampart of fire formed by four hundred pieces of artillery.

Such was the sight which presented itself to the view of the soldiers on their awakening. The spectacle was the more likely to strike their imagination, because they had not brought into the war any of the enthusiasm which would have softened the lugubriousness of the scene. It was not that their country might be freer, greater, or more prosperous, that they had come to brave death through so many privations, upon this frightful field of battle; it was for the whim of an exacting master, and for a whim of which he gave an account to no one; for what had he not alleged to justify himself for having rejected so advantageous and so honourable a peace? Sometimes Pondichery, sometimes the Poles, sometimes the Turks! In reality—and they well knew it—Napoleon had only been influenced by his desire to rule Europe, and to keep the kingdom which the fate of arms had thrown into his hands. If

these thoughts did not shake their courage, they were at least more calculated to damp their ardour than to give them enthusiasm. When a great incentive is wanting, the common needs of the soldiers must at least be satisfied; their courage then is closely connected with their physical well-being. In spite of their continual success, our troops, deprived of bread and spirits, reduced to the provisions which they dug up in the fields, had endured great privations since the opening of the campaign. The sufferings of the Russians, though cruel, were much less.'[1] The inhospitable sky was the sky of their country; they saw in it an auxiliary; in the cold, almost a liberator. Nor were they going as the instruments of a tyrant's whim to carry destruction into a foreign country; ranged along their frontiers to repel a hostile approach, they could at least believe that they were fighting for their hearths.

It is difficult to estimate even approximately the effective of the two armies which were then on the point of cutting each other to pieces on the frozen plains of Eylau, so much has national pride on both sides prevented any light being thrown on the subject. Napoleon had all his army with him except Lannes' corps, which was left at Warsaw, Bernadotte's corps, which had remained behind, and Ney's corps, which was engaged a little distance off with Lestocq's Prussians, whom he neutralised. There remained, therefore, the corps of Davoust, Augereau, and Soult, and Murat's guard and cavalry. These different corps could not form less than seventy thousand men. Historians who reckon his army at less than this number are very embarrassed to explain how, after having swept up three hundred and thirty thousand men in Germany, he could only bring fifty-four thousand on the field of battle. They solve the difficulty by asserting that he left behind him sixty thousand stragglers, quite forgetting that this is casting a far graver reflection on Napoleon than granting him a few thousand more men upon the field of Eylau. On the other hand, in this

[1] The evidence of Fezensac, who was made prisoner by the Russians, and who was therefore able to make the comparison *de visu*, is conclusive on this point.

estimate of sixty thousand stragglers in the French army there is no allowance made for a single one in the Russian army, which had just made infinitely longer and more painful marches than ours — a magnificent encomium, although it is intended to detract from their merit, but one that must appear exaggerated when we reflect that there were a great many deserters among the Poles. Putting aside the improbable estimates that were drawn up later under the influence of national and military susceptibilities, we may rely on the opinion of an excellent judge, himself a witness and actor in these events—General Jomini—who reckons that the forces were equal on both sides, except with regard to the artillery, in which the Russians were superior in numbers and the French in precision.

Napoleon confronted the deep masses of the Russian army with a much thinner but more extended line, which rendered his fire more destructive. He had intrenched a part of Soult's corps in the town of Eylau, another to the left of the town; in the centre, in the cemetery and around it, was his guard, on ground strewed with the dead of the day before; at the right, in the village of Rothenen, another of Soult's divisions, supported by Augereau's corps; a little behind, in the intervals left between these positions, was stationed Murat's cavalry. With regard to Davoust's corps, sent off the day before in the direction of Domnau, and recalled in all haste, it was to enter the field a little later, debouching at the extreme left of the Russians, and almost in their rear. If Davoust's attack succeeded, their left would be driven into their centre, and the whole army thrown back in the direction of Königsberg, where they would find their march barred by Ney's corps.

A frightful cannonade had already commenced between the moving ramparts of artillery which covered the front of the two armies. Motionless under the deadly fire which shot down whole files, they both waited with impassibility for the moment of coming to close quarters. For several hours each sought to break through the ranks of the enemy with the cannon, as if they were storming a fortress, but the breaches made by the artillery were immediately closed

up. The Russians, accustomed to Napoleon's rapid and formidable offensive warfare, were dismayed at this novel attitude, and seem to dread one of those terrible surprises that were so familiar with him. However, more exposed than ourselves by their open situation to the havoc of the artillery, they were the first to give way. They came to manœuvre on our left, as if they would outflank it, but their attention was very soon drawn to another side. Sharp firing was heard on their flanks on the side of Serpallen; it was Davoust, who had arrived on the field of battle, and was driving before him the two divisions that had resisted him. In Napoleon's plan, his appearance was to form the decisive event of the day, in the same way as Ney, who had been recalled from Kreutzberg a little later, was to complete the issue of the battle.

It was then about one o'clock, and the sky, instead of clearing, had become still more gloomy. In order to derive the full advantage from his lieutenant's powerful diversion, and to hinder the Russians from attacking his isolated corps with all their forces, Napoleon at length decided upon taking up the offensive. He pushed Saint-Hilaire's division to his extreme right to join hands with Davoust, and he sent Augereau's *corps d'armée* to attack the Russian centre. While Saint-Hilaire drew out the enemy's left towards Serpallen, Augereau, sword in hand, though ill for several days, led Desjardin's and Heudelet's divisions through a regular hurricane of shot and ball. Before they could reach the enemy they were enveloped in a whirlwind of snow, which, driving against the soldiers' faces, blinded and paralysed them, rendering their arms useless and their march confused and uncertain. The Russians, who turned their backs to the wind, and who had not moved from their positions, were, on the contrary, able to calculate their distance. They crushed with the fire of their artillery these hesitating masses, that seemed to have become equally incapable of drawing back or marching forward. In a few minutes, half of Augereau's corps was placed *hors de combat*, his generals and principal officers killed or wounded, and himself injured in the head. Then the Russian cavalry

rushed forward, pursuing and cutting to pieces our fugitive soldiers; it was no longer a defeat, but complete destruction. This *corps d'armée* was disbanded after the battle, for fear the small number of survivors should retain too vivid a recollection of that fatal day.

It was a most critical moment. The Russian squadrons charged our soldiers up to the approaches of the cemetery in which Napoleon was stationed. Intrenched in this enclosure, and exposed to a shower of shot and ball, the guard defended with difficulty this central point, which was the key of our positions. Augereau, brought bleeding out of this fearful conflict, bitterly complained of the way in which he had been abandoned. The sky had cleared, and allowed the whole extent of the disaster to be seen. Napoleon saw that a great effort was necessary to turn the scale in our favour. By his orders Murat formed the eighty squadrons of our cavalry into a single legion; with this irresistible mass he made a desperate charge on the Russian centre. He first brought back the enemy's cavalry; he then broke the first line of infantry, crossed it, and cut his way through the second; but when he reached the third he made several charges without succeeding in breaking through it. His ardour failed before the firmness of these troops, and he had to turn back after a desperate struggle. But the lines, half overthrown by this frightful avalanche of men and horses, had held their positions, and had formed again behind him. He was forced to break through them afresh, in order to open a passage to our positions.

This magnificent irruption upon the centre of the Russians had resulted in no decisive issue; but meanwhile, one of their columns, which under cover of the great disorder had ventured as far as Eylau, was captured almost entire, and Davoust had achieved his movement. Supported by Saint-Hilaire's division, he had driven the Russian left from Serpallen to Saussgarten, and afterwards as far back as the village of Kuschitten. But there he was stopped short by the detachments which Bennigsen sent one after another against him. In spite of the brilliant success of this attack the battle was still uncertain, for our centre was

exhausted, and only feebly sustained Davoust's movement. In all probability, however, this flank attack would have ended by gravely imperilling Bennigsen's situation, had not an unforeseen event given the Russians the advantage. Lestocq, escaping from Ney's pursuit with a portion of his *corps d'armée*, while the marshal still in ignorance of what had taken place at Eylau was driving his enemy before him in the direction of Königsberg, just then made his appearance at Althoff on the extreme Russian right. After having passed without stopping behind Bennigsen's army as far as his extreme left, he deployed his eight thousand men before Davoust's corps, which was forced to fall back in its turn. This unexpected incident changed in a few moments the face of things. Thanks to the vigorous manner in which Lestocq had resumed the offensive, the Russians recovered almost all the ground that they had lost on this side. Instead of defending themselves, they attacked our troops, who fell back. Perhaps a general effort from the whole of their line might have definitely given them the victory, perhaps we might have experienced another Pultowa, or learned to know even then something of the disasters of a retreat from Russia, had not Ney, who after several hours lost in useless skirmishes had been joined and warned by his aide-de-camp Fezensac, at length appeared by the side of Schmoditten, too late to really change the issue of this bloody and undecided battle, but early enough at least to prevent the scales turning in favour of our adversaries.

Night had come on, but no darkness was thick enough to conceal the horror of this field of carnage, on which lay nearly forty thousand men, wounded, dying, or dead. 'What a massacre, and without any issue!' exclaimed Marshal Ney the following day, as he turned his eyes from the heaps of corpses shrouded in their winding-sheets of snow. 'What a massacre, and *for no cause!*' he might still more rightly have said. Our soldiers had not fought for any interest or for any principle. Without love and without hatred, they were dying for a whim, like the gladiators of the circus. At least half the victims in this slaughter had fallen from our ranks; for if the cannonade at the

commencement of the action had been more sanguinary for the Russians than for ourselves, our attacks had several times been repulsed, and nothing in war involves greater loss than an attack that fails. For a general like Napoleon, and especially at such a distance from our basis of operations, an uncertain battle was a failure if not a defeat; and what increased its gravity was Napoleon's engagement, that was still present to all minds, to drive the Russians '*beyond the Niemen.*' Now, not only had the Russians continued their retreat without Napoleon thinking of molesting them, but they were marching towards Königsberg, where there was no other issue than the sea, as if to defy us to force them into it. On the other hand, Napoleon had remained master of the field of battle; and although he was incapable of attempting anything further, he was not a man not to take advantage of this circumstance to transform the check into victory. His army had, in reality, suffered so fearfully that it would have been impossible for him to keep his positions any longer before a resolute enemy. Bennigsen's lieutenants, Generals Knorring and Tolstoï, entreated their commander to renew the fight; but he had sustained enormous losses, and his soldiers were dying of hunger. Napoleon's inflexible will prevailed.

Such is the value of tenacity in war, that it is not improbable that the obstinate and indomitable attitude of a Wellington would have constrained him almost immediately to retreat. This is so true that even when the Russians retreated voluntarily, the principal officers of the army thought we ought to retrogade beyond the Vistula, and Napoleon himself was inclined to this opinion. The day after the battle, writing to General Duroc, one of the few men who had inspired him with confidence, thanks to his reserved and taciturn character, he said: 'There was a very bloody battle yesterday at Eylau. The field of battle remained in our hands, *but if a great many men were killed on both sides, the situation renders my loss the more sensible.* . . . It is possible that, in order to get quiet winter-quarters, I shall remove to the left bank of the Vistula.'[1] This is very different from what Berthier wrote the day before

[1] Napoleon to Duroc, February 9, 1807.

to Josephine in a letter that was intercepted: '*To-morrow Königsberg will have the honour of receiving the Emperor!*' To acknowledge that the situation rendered his loss heavier was to recognise that his foolish policy had even clouded his military views, which in general were so clear and so profound; for it was this alone which had placed him in a situation in which each blow he received counted double, and in which he could not utilise a fifth of his forces. But he felt, with his lofty genius and his pride, how unfortunate would be the moral effect of a retreat upon the Vistula; and not only did he reject this idea as soon as Bennigsen's inaction showed him the possibility of escaping from so humiliating an extremity, but he began to speak of victory with that assurance which for so long deluded even the soldiers themselves. A few hours after having dictated this letter to Duroc, he wrote to Cambacérès to publish in the *Moniteur* 'that the Russian army *had been completely put to rout*, that they had lost from ten to twelve thousand prisoners, and fourteen thousand in dead or wounded.' With regard to ourselves, he had only fifteen hundred killed and four thousand wounded.[1] In his bulletin it would almost have seemed an insult to the sufferings of the soldiers to have reckoned their losses so low; he accordingly owned to one thousand nine hundred dead, and five thousand seven hundred wounded,—a number, however, which fell far short of the truth.[2] Soon after, the mournful impressions of the first moment having been dispelled, he did not fear to estimate the losses of the Russians at forty thousand men and fifteen or sixteen generals; then when he reached Landsberg, and had no longer before his eyes the field of battle which was witness to the destruction of a whole *corps d'armée*, he did not hesitate to write in his sixty-first bulletin '*that it was fortunate for Königsberg that it had not entered into the calculations of the French general to force the Russian army into this position!*' A puerile and foolish bravado, for it inevitably suggested to all minds a question to which there could be but one reply.

[1] To Cambacérès, February 9, 1807.
[2] Fifty-eighth bulletin.

The most ignorant soldier was capable of understanding that if it had not entered into Bonaparte's calculations to deal so extraordinary and so decisive a blow, it was solely because he had recognised its impossibility.

In order to give an idea of the cynical impudence which characterised this man, and of the slight dependence that can be placed on his military reports, I will confine myself to quoting the assertions contained in two letters written *the same day*, one to Cambacérès, the other to Daru, and relating to *the same fact*, that is to say, the number of our wounded in the battle of Eylau. 'My cousin,' he wrote to Cambacérès, 'now that all the reports are made up, it appears that the losses we experienced in the battle of Eylau were rather exaggerated than underrated in this bulletin. *They amount to three thousand wounded and fifteen hundred dead.*' To Daru he wrote: 'Monsieur Daru, according to your report of the 8th of March, the number of wounded who have entered the hospitals of Thorn is only four thousand. *That is very few, there must be more; I had reckoned that there were from seven to eight thousand wounded.*'[1] He was the more likely to have reckoned on this number from the reports of his officers, which calculated the wounded at twelve thousand. How could he not know that the hospitals of Thorn could not possibly contain all these poor wretches? that a great number of them had either been dispersed with the stragglers in the neighbouring localities, or had been abandoned on account of the difficulty of transport? 'I was ordered to follow General Colbert, who covered the retreat,' wrote Fezensac; 'we were therefore the last to leave. The road was filled with carriages and waggons of every description, which had sunk into the snow. A great many wounded had taken refuge in these vehicles, and entreated us in vain not to abandon them. . . . The general sent an officer to recommend the unfortunate beings to the kindness of the burgomaster of Eylau, and to the commander of the Russian advance-guard, whose Cossacks already occupied the town.'[2] Com-

[1] Napoleon to Cambacérès and to Daru, March 11, 1807.

[2] *Souvenirs Militaires* de Fezensac. Another eye-witness, R.

pared with these shameful dissemblings, the report in which Bennigsen boldly claimed the victory, while he admitted a total loss of twelve thousand killed, may pass for a model of truthfulness.[1] Moreover, what better than anything else shows the real state of our affairs after the battle of Eylau is the complete change which immediately took place in Napoleon's policy towards the same king of Prussia whom he had been treating with so much harshness and contempt. The day before, he derisively put him off to the epoch of the general peace, seemed to doubt whether he would ever re-establish him upon his throne, and, at all events, openly announced his intention of never restoring to him his Polish provinces. How much his feelings had softened after the battle! 'My brother,' he wrote to him, on the 13th of February, 'I send to your Majesty General Bertrand, who has my entire confidence. He will say things which will I trust be agreeable; may your Majesty believe that this *is the finest moment of my life!* I flatter myself that it will be the commencement of a lasting friendship between us.'

What Bertrand was charged to offer to King Frederick William was the restitution of the Prussian provinces as far as the Elbe. These were the conditions which Napoleon had so obstinately refused a few months before. It was this separate peace which he had declared was impossible. Bertrand's instructions prescribed to him to represent to the king of Prussia that his alliance with Russia was only a vassalage disguised; that the sufferings of his people did not permit him to wait for the consent of England; 'that Napoleon wished alone to have the glory of reorganising

Wilson, fully confirms the truth of this account. The Russians seized two hundred of these carriages filled with our wounded. All the neighbouring villages were crowded with our sick.—'A Sketch of the Campaign,' etc.

[1] 'I lay at the feet of your Majesty,' he wrote to Alexander, 'twelve flags taken from the enemy.' These flags were carried by Colonel Beckindorff to St. Petersburg, where every one could see them. This did not, however, prevent Napoleon from writing in his fifty-ninth bulletin, 'that only a single regiment had lost its eagle by an accident of war.'

the Prussian nation, whose power was necessary to the whole of Europe.' It was somewhat late to recognise this truth, but the battle of Eylau had opened his eyes. It had revealed many other things to him besides. In reconciling himself with Prussia, what was he going to do with the unfortunate Poles whom he had compromised, and whom he still continued to enlist under his standard? 'General Bertrand,' continued Napoleon, '*will let it be understood that since the Emperor has learned to know Poland*, HE NO LONGER ATTACHES ANY IMPORTANCE TO IT.'[1] The perfect indifference that Napoleon showed to his natural allies was scarcely calculated to induce the king of Prussia to accept this *eternal friendship* which Bertrand had just proposed to him; he was, besides, too closely bound to Russia to make peace without her; he accordingly insisted on a Congress, in which the conditions of a European peace should be discussed. But Napoleon, formerly so ardent for this idea, now only saw its inconvenience. He reminded the king of Prussia 'that the Congress of Westphalia had lasted eighteen months,' and persisted in requiring a separate treaty, declaring, however, that he was ready to accept an arrangement with Russia and England, *if they really wished it*, and that this was what he desired. 'I should be horrified at myself,' he added, 'to be the cause of so much bloodshed, but if England believes that this effusion of blood is useful to her projects and her monopoly, what am I to do?'[2]

This bad argument but thinly disguised his real thought. Three months before, the miserable condition to which he had reduced Prussia offered him a sure means of intimidating and influencing the coalesced powers. Then he had demanded a general congress; now, on the contrary, the situation of these powers had so much improved that they could act efficiently in favour of their ally. That was why he would no longer treat except with King Frederick William alone. The contradiction was therefore only apparent, and this ostentatious generosity was only a snare.

[1] Instructions for General Bertrand, February 13, 1807.
[2] Napoleon to the king of Prussia, February 26, 1807.

CHAPTER VII

SHAM NEGOTIATIONS—THE INACTION AT OSTERODE AND AT FINKENSTEIN

(*March–May* 1807)

Thus failed an attempt that was neither sincere nor honourable, and which had only been made in the hope of dividing our adversaries. There was a want of dignity, as well as of sincerity and tact, in so openly flattering, the day after a reverse, those whom he had previously treated with such coarse contempt.

Napoleon, after having vigorously driven in the enemy's outposts in order to obtain quiet winter-quarters, removed his head-quarters to Osterode, on the frontiers of Prussia. He rested on Thorn, as two months before he had rested on Warsaw. He established his army behind the Passarge and the Alle. His extreme left was at Braunsberg, his centre extended from Mohrungen to Allenstein, his right from Gilgenburg to Willenberg. These positions, though more concentrated than the former ones, were neither very strong nor very secure; they were much too far from our centres of supplies, which exposed the troops during the remainder of the winter to the most cruel privations. Napoleon has himself given in his correspondence a fearful picture of the state of destitution to which the soldiers were several times reduced. They were without bread, without brandy, without shelter, without shoes, in the midst of snow and ice. We are, however, compelled to admit that his admirable military instinct did not fail him, and that after having committed the fault of transporting the war into so

inhospitable a country, he repaired it by resolutely bearing up against these first trials, instead of giving way and acknowledging himself vanquished. His indomitable attitude daunted his enemy, and prevented him from again disturbing our cantonments; it daunted Austria still more, whose intervention at this moment would have been all powerful, and who lost the opportunity. A retrograde movement, on the contrary, would have emboldened our enemies throughout Europe; it would have been the signal perhaps for a calamitous disorder. His bold and skilful resolution is the most striking criticism on Bennigsen's line of conduct. This general had, it is true, sustained great losses, but his offensive warfare in the depth of winter had hitherto succeeded too well for him to abandon it, and the more Napoleon showed a desire to keep quiet till the fine weather, the less ought Bennigsen to have resigned himself to the inaction to which he was condemned for the remainder of the winter.

Several victories won upon other points by our soldiers and our allies gradually weakened the disastrous impression of Eylau. Savary, who was charged with the command of Lannes' corps while that general was ill, cleared the approaches of the Narew, which were so necessary to our occupation of Warsaw, and beat the Russians at Ostrolenka. In the course of February, Lefebvre invested Dantzic; Mortier occupied the neighbourhood of Stralsund, which he could not invest for want of ammunition; our army of Silesia hurried on the sieges of Neisse and Glatz; and our allies, the Turks, stood their ground on the Danube against Michelson, who was obliged to send detachments on the Bug to assist Bennigsen.

At Constantinople the Sultan Selim, marvellously aided by Sebastiani, won a great diplomatic and military victory over the Anglo-Russian coalition. After the declaration of war from Russia and the departure of her ambassador Italinski, Selim had had to listen to the remonstrances and intimidations of England. He had yielded to them for an instant, but had very soon repented of his weakness. England was the more anxious to put an end to the Sultan's

hesitation, because she had hitherto only given Russia a very feeble support, and she feared lest that power should appropriate a part of the Turkish provinces at the conclusion of a successful war. Admiral Duckworth's fleet was recalled from the coast of Spain to the Dardanelles, to give weight to the remonstrances of the British Cabinet. Their minister, Mr. Arbuthnot, presented an imperious ultimatum to the Porte. He summoned the Sultan to dismiss Sebastiani, and to pronounce in favour of the Anglo-Russian alliance (February 25th). On Selim's refusal, Arbuthnot embarked with his fellow-countrymen to join the fleet. War was immediately declared with England. Duckworth intrepidly entered the straits with his weak squadron under the cannon of the palaces of the Dardanelles. He sustained their badly directed fire without injury, burned and destroyed the vessels that he met on his passage, and came to anchor off Prince's Island, a few miles from the seraglio (February 21st). Terror reigned in Constantinople, where no measure of defence had been taken. Duckworth insisted on the immediate acceptance of the ultimatum, the conditions of which were made still harder by fresh requirements. In this first moment of consternation, a single ball fired on the seraglio would have obtained the immediate submission of the Sultan and his capital, but the English admiral was deterred by scruples of humanity. He consented to negotiate, and lost all the fruit of his successful boldness. Sebastiani, who displayed a great deal of decision, coolness, and skill, in this difficult situation, went to the Sultan and raised his courage. He showed him the possibility of gaining time, and of organising the defence. He made the English retire to some distance, and amused them for several days with pretended negotiations. In the meantime he erected batteries along the shore, armed the gunboats, drew up the old ships so that their broadsides might bear on the coast, and had the Turkish marines exercised by French officers whom Napoleon had sent him.

At last Duckworth perceived (February 26) that he had been tricked. Instead of being able to intimidate, he found

himself threatened in his turn. He was obliged again to enter the narrow strait through which he had come, under the fire of an artillery that had become formidable. He reappeared before Constantinople, which henceforth laughed at his attacks. To complete his misfortunes, contrary winds hindered him from taking up a position before the town to commence offensive operations. Each day increased his peril. He was compelled to leave, and he once more confronted the batteries of the Dardanelles, whose enormous guns did his vessels great damage (March 3).[1]

Selim's unexpected energy, and the success of his resistance to the injunctions of the British Cabinet, gave Napoleon great joy, by proving the power of a diversion on the efficaciousness of which he had never much reckoned. The news did not reach him till the beginning of April 1807. He resolved to render his alliance with Selim still closer, and at the same time to strengthen it by a firm union with Persia, from which he also hoped to derive great advantage. He publicly announced in the *Moniteur* that the Russians had offered peace to Persia, and that Fethali Shah had rejected the proposition, exclaiming '*that so long as the great emperor, his friend, was at war with the Russians, they need not hope for either peace or truce!*'[2] He offered Selim arms, ammunition, soldiers, or help of any kind. 'You have shown yourself,' he wrote to him, April 3d, 'the worthy descendant of Selim and of Soliman. You have asked me for a few officers, I send them to you. . . . Generals, officers, soldiers, arms of every kind, even money, I place at your disposal. You have only to ask; ask plainly, and whatever you ask for shall be sent immediately. Make friends with the Shah of Persia, who is also the enemy of the Russians. Persuade him to remain firm, and vigorously to attack the common enemy.' He wrote in the same manner to the Shah, in order to stir him to attack

[1] Duckworth's reports, addressed to Admiral Collingwood, from February 21 to March 3, 1807 ('Annual Register for the Year 1807, Appendix to the Chronicle'). Letter from Sebastiani to Marmont, March 4, 1807.

[2] *Moniteur*, April 2, 1807.

both the English and the Russians;[1] and began to give his attention at once to the organising of General Gardane's mission, who did not, however, start till the following month of May. The letter to Selim concluded thus: '*Peace has been proposed to me, I have been offered all the advantage that I could desire;* but I should have had to ratify the state of things established between the Porte and Russia by the treaty of Sistowa, and *I refused.* I replied that it was necessary that absolute independence should be insured to the Porte.'

This postscript contained as many lies as it did words. If Napoleon attached so much importance to the alliance of Turkey and Persia, if he showed so much consideration and affection for these two sovereigns, who must have been rather astonished at so sudden an attachment, it was simply because his successive advances to Prussia and Austria had been received with mistrust and coldness. The same may be said of the exaggerated expressions of sympathy for the Swedish nation to which he gave utterance about this time, when Mortier, after having beaten the Swedes at Passewalk, concluded a truce with them which for a time separated them from the coalition. 'The Emperor,' said Napoleon, in his seventy-second bulletin, 'has always been deeply grieved to make war on a brave and generous nation, who *by their history and geographical position are the friends of France.* . . . The Emperor's instructions have always been to treat the Swedes as friends with whom we have quarrelled, but with whom the force of things cannot fail to reconcile us. The dearest interests of the two peoples demand it. *If they injured us, they would regret it another day, and we wish to repair the evil which we have done to them.*' Nothing can be more just than these considerations; but why in his mouth were they only a feint, suggested by a temporary embarrassment, instead of being the sincere and lasting expression of his policy? Sweden, Turkey, Persia, and Poland, were in reality the only allies that he could henceforward hope to have; but these nations were soon to learn

[1] Napoleon to Selim, April 3, 1807; to the Shah of Persia, the same day.

to their cost what value he set even upon an alliance based upon that community of interests, traditions, and sympathy, upon which he laid so much stress. When he wrote these declarations which cost him so little, he had already for some time been turning over in his mind the chances of a reconciliation either with Russia or Austria,—a reconciliation which would inevitably involve the abandonment or sacrifice of these boasted alliances.

After his awkward and unsuccessful attempt to win over the king of Prussia the day after the battle of Eylau, Napoleon again turned towards Austria. Besides being alarmed at his own isolation, he was seriously disquieted by the ill-concealed armaments of this power, who alleged with a great deal of reason the necessity of placing herself in a position to make neutrality respected. He very rightly felt that, after all the wrong he had done to Austria, it required very little to change the distrustful attitude of the cabinet of Vienna into one of open hostility. He therefore resolved to gain her friendship at any price. 'What does the house of Austria want?' he wrote to Talleyrand on the 3d of March. 'If they wish to treat, in order to guarantee the integrity of Turkey, I will consent. If they wish for a treaty, *by which, if Russia acquired an increase of territory in Turkey, the two powers would make common cause to obtain an equivalent,* that can also be arranged.' After having so plainly shown the value he set upon the interests of his good friend Selim, and of that *integrity* which recurred in all his manifestoes, he bade Talleyrand again offer a portion of Silesia. In short, he was to let Napoleon know 'what was requisite to secure the friendship of Austria.' But even supposing that Austria knew nothing of the propositions of a totally different character which Napoleon had just made to the king of Prussia, which is not very probable, what confidence could she have in such abrupt proposals, or in a man who changed his tone so frequently and so completely and who sacrificed his most faithful friends with such shameless ease; who displayed, in a word, so much gentleness and affability after so much arrogance?

M. de Vincent, to whom Talleyrand made these unex-

pected overtures, expressed more surprise than eagerness. He replied that his court had no desire to appropriate the spoils of Turkey, or to enrich herself at the expense of her neighbours; she only asked for the security of her own possessions. Napoleon returned to the charge. 'M. de Vincent,' he wrote to Talleyrand, the 9th of March, 'must tell us what they want, for all this must end in an alliance between France and Austria, or between France and Russia, Austria has no grounds for her alarm, for the Emperor's plan is this: to restore to the king of Prussia his throne and his states; and to maintain the integrity of the Porte.' Since Austria does not wish for the division of Turkey, he invoked anew the great principle of integrity. With regard to Poland, he immediately adds, '*the explanation is contained in the first part of the sentence;*' that is to say, that the stipulation of restoring to the king of Prussia his states puts Poland out of the question. Thus he held his soldiers, the Poles, as cheap as his friends the Turks. He offered to sacrifice them to Austria, as he had already offered to sacrifice them to Prussia. Did he at least cease during this time to compromise them and to urge them forward? No, he never lavished their blood and their resources more profusely. Two days before, on the 6th of March, he wrote to Zajonchek to hurry him to complete the organisation of his *corps d'armée*, which was to be raised to *twenty-five thousand men;* he begged him to enrol under his standard all the nobility on the right bank of the Vistula; and he wrote to Talleyrand the same day that he was going to stir up an insurrection in Volhynia and Podolia! But perhaps he had to complain of their slowness and their want of energy? Not the least. He admitted that he had not, in the plainest terms: 'Endeavour,' he wrote to Talleyrand at this very time, 'to persuade Gouvion to have a little more patience with the Poles. *They appear to me to be rendering as much service as circumstances will permit.*'[1] We see by this conduct whether the enlightened Poles were right or wrong in not trusting Napoleon.

[1] Napoleon to General Zajonchek, March 6, 1807; to Talleyrand, the same date.

The Austrian cabinet received these fresh advances very coldly, and maintained an impenetrable reserve. Napoleon was the last man to bear this enigmatical attitude in an adversary for any length of time. He became irritable and impatient, and very soon he threatened Austria. He no longer attempted to seduce her, he made preparations for giving her the choice between an alliance and war. In order to intimidate more surely, he determined to deal an extraordinary blow. It was scarcely four months since he had asked for the conscription of the eighty thousand men who ought not to have been drawn till a year later: he was now by a fresh abuse of power going to call in March 1807 for the eighty thousand conscripts of 1808; he was going to make this terrible avowal to France, that he required two conscriptions in four months; that with all his genius, an army of five hundred and forty thousand men was not sufficient to protect the national honour! And even then he had not owned all, for he intended in the month of September to draw the conscripts of 1809! 'I am going to arm eighty thousand men,' he wrote to Talleyrand, the 30th of March; 'in the month of September I shall arm eighty thousand more.' At the same time, while, by a fresh violation of the laws which he had himself made, he withdrew the vote of this iniquitous measure from the Legislative Body to impose it on his complaisant senators, he impudently gave as his motive 'that England had just made a levy of two hundred thousand men.'[1]

He warned his friends, Cambacérès and Lacuée, that objections were useless, that he knew them beforehand, that he should listen to no remonstrance nor suffer any delay; that such was his unchangeable will. Talleyrand received orders to inform the Court of Vienna that our levies were made in consequence of her own armaments and her own equivocal policy; 'that he wanted her reply to our overtures, to give a half turn to the right to our army of Brittany and Normandy . . . that she would be very foolish to draw the theatre of war upon her own territory, . . . that he was ready to have his army passed in review by an Austrian

[1] Message to the Senate.

officer, who would thus see with his own eyes how many troops France could send into Bavaria before a month was out. . . . In short, Austria ought to accept his overtures of peace; at all events, she must no longer give him cause for anxiety, nor make use of any more threats.'

Such insolent provocation, coming immediately after such flattering overtures, was enough to exasperate the most patient statesmen; and perhaps Austria, even weak as she then was, would not have tolerated such language had it reached her without being softened. But by a singular coincidence, at the very moment that Napoleon was sending her this foolish challenge, she was offering him her mediation with the coalesced powers. Napoleon wrote his letter on the 19th of March, and on the following day, the 20th, he received one from Talleyrand, informing him of the offer of the Austrian cabinet. He was bitterly disappointed, for this benevolent proposition caused his threats to fall to the ground by depriving him of the pretext for them, and gave Austria the advantage of the delay. In spite of his hypocritical declarations in favour of peace, he had no longer any desire to make it, since the large reinforcements had filled up the gaps in his army, and the aim of his steps with the different powers had been to gain an additional ally, and not to conclude a peace. The Court of Vienna volunteered him her kind services; what he wished to obtain was the assistance of her armies. He felt, however, all the gravity of the incident, and did not conceal from himself that the Austrian intervention might in a very short time end in war. His embarrassment betrayed itself in the incessant changes in his language and conduct. At first he ordered Talleyrand to maintain an ambiguous attitude, not to reply either Yes or No, to require Austria to cease arming.[1] A few days later he urged him to settle with Austria; he declared himself ready to accept the mediation, and even asked to have a suspension of arms for three or six months added to it.[2] On the 16th of April he officially accepted the mediation,

[1] Napoleon to Talleyrand, March 20.
[2] To the same, March 26.

still insisting on the armistice,[1] but he very soon altered his mind. Before any armistice, he wanted to name Dantzic and Graudenz, which towns were closely surrounded by his soldiers. He blamed Talleyrand for agreeing to the *status præsens* as basis; he enjoined him to make no engagement, to feign ignorance, to delay affairs; he regarded the intervention of Austria as a *misfortune;* everything, therefore, 'even the place in which the Congress should be held, must be made ground for discussion.'[2]

Throughout this negotiation, of which it was so easy to foresee the issue, his absolute want of principle and of all rule of conduct, and the incredible changes in his ideas, which had no other compass to steer by than the interest of the moment, considered from the most selfish and most ephemeral point of view, degenerated into short-sightedness and folly. It did not require more to cause the failure of a project which had only been an expedient for Austria, and which the other powers had never for an instant regarded as serious. They accepted the mediation of Austria in principle, but they confined themselves to vague declarations, and there was nothing serious or definite in their steps, beyond the Convention of Bartenstein (April 26), which drew the alliance between Frederick William and Alexander still closer. The two sovereigns joined together afresh for the common defence, and for the reconstruction of Europe. They strictly engaged *not to make any conquest on their own account during the whole time of the war* (Art. 13). This engagement, which was certainly disinterested, though perhaps somewhat premature, shows to what illusions the indecisive battle of Eylau had given rise in their minds.

During the interchange of these pacific demonstrations, which resembled the skilful counter-marches and feigned movements by which generals endeavour to discover the weak side of an adversary, Napoleon, who had taken up his residence first at Osterode, then at the château of Finkenstein (April 1st), was actively employed in raising the courage of his soldiers, in insuring his supplies, which had

[1] Napoleon to Talleyrand, April 16. [2] To the same, April 23.

at first been so deficient, in hastening the arrival of his reinforcements, and in the organisation of his conscripts. On the 4th of April, Cambacérès and Regnault de Saint-Jean d'Angély presented themselves in his name before the dismayed Senate, to obtain their leave to draw the conscripts of 1808. Cambacérès swore by all that was sacred that these young men would only be employed at home. He dwelt upon the '*paternal kindness*' of his Majesty, who was unwilling that these fresh conscripts should affront the hardships of war before they had been by degrees familiarised with them. A report of Berthier's was then read, which stated 'that his Majesty's army had never been so large, so well trained, or better organised; but that it was necessary to make up the losses sustained in battle and by sickness;' concise and terrible language, which well expressed the anticipated destruction of this immense annual levy. Regnault was the last to speak. He felt for the Emperor, who had done everything to have peace, 'and whose heart bled while he demanded this fresh conscription.' He felt for the conscripts too. 'Strictly speaking,' he said, 'they will only be national guards, corps *in which children, obeying the voice of nature*, will replace their fathers under the departmental eagles. . . . It costs his Majesty dear, witness the bulletin from Eylau which breathes regret rather than joy at the victory!'[1]

This pathetic appeal moved the senators, who had too much feeling to refuse their vote to this Tibullus of conscription. Conscription and proscription were already, to use an expression of a contemporary,[2] the first word and the last of the imperial *régime*. Napoleon had none of the sentimentality that Regnault ascribed to him. His 'paternal kindness' consisted in re-establishing by inexorable severity the discipline which had lately been greatly relaxed. 'I have been sorry to see,' he wrote to Soult, 'that a peasant had come from Elditten to Liebstadt. Shall we never know how to maintain order? Not even a hare ought to cross the line. Shoot the first person that passes, be he

[1] *Moniteur*, April 8, 1807.
[2] Daunou: *Essai sur les garanties*.

innocent or guilty.'[1] It is by such means, it appears, that what it is customary to call *great things* in war are done. He took advantage of the leisure which Bennigsen left him, to push forward the sieges of those places which still held out, like Neisse and Glatz in Silesia, and Graudenz and Colberg in Upper Prussia. He was particularly anxious to take Dantzic, an extremely difficult undertaking, of which he wished to give the honour to Lefebvre, but which was in reality directed by Chasseloup and Lariboisière, two eminent engineers. Dantzic was invested the 8th of March, and from that day a regular siege was carried on by a corps of twenty thousand men, composed partly of auxiliary troops. This period of comparative tranquillity also gave him an opportunity of casting a glance at our internal affairs, which were in a very unsatisfactory situation. As he had resolved, while delegating a part of his authority to the Archchancellor Cambacérès, still to remain at the head of the administration, it is easy to understand that after so long an absence, amid such tumultuous and complicated events, he was not in a position to give the internal government that daily impulsion without which nothing could any longer work in France. As everything was subject to the decision of his disordered will, all business was suspended and stopped at the same time, and we see by his correspondence that before the slightest difference could be settled, or an arrangement made with the singers of the opera, it was necessary to send as far as Eylau to ask the conqueror what line of conduct was to be followed. With what competence, what acquaintance with the questions, the interests, the justice of the case, such judgments were given, it is useless for any enlightened mind to examine. A general confusion, a sense of uneasiness, and a deplorable inertness in all branches of national activity except that which sustained the war, was the inevitable consequence of such a system. The alarm caused by the perilous situation of the army after Eylau was not calculated to lessen the evil.

Such confusion was the result of his policy, and however

[1] Napoleon to Soult, February 28.

anxious he may have been to remedy it, it was not in his power to do so, so long as he persisted in carrying out his chimerical views. It is not possible for a man, even of a political genius far superior to that of Bonaparte, to govern a state well, much less a vast empire, five hundred leagues from its frontiers, in the midst of the agitations, the accidents, and the innumerable necessities of a military life. When Napoleon had ridden fifteen or twenty leagues in the day to visit his cantonments; when he had dictated the letters concerning the movements of his troops; when he had settled what measures should be taken in order to insure the punctual arrival of supplies, ammunition, and equipments, to send instructions to the different generals, to give harmony to the various operations, to carry on the sieges, and to conduct the negotiations,—it is obvious that there remained very insufficient time for the management of the internal affairs of the empire, and that he could give very little attention to them. The writers who represent him as bearing this enormous weight with ease, and ruling the empire from his camp at Osterode with a kind of omniscience and omnipresence, make use of a style of language that is more appropriate to theology than history. By a singular anomaly they are the same writers who, by reckoning that he had sixty thousand stragglers at Eylau, depict him as henceforth incapable of working the gigantic machine which he had organised under the name of the Grand Army.

This contradiction plainly shows how little their accounts can be depended upon. The truth is that, even in a military point of view, Napoleon was beginning to be overwhelmed by the vastness of his enterprises; his genius and activity still enabled him to overcome insuperable difficulties, but the frailty and defects in his work were betrayed at each turn, and at the first defeat it seemed to crumble away. Nominally he governed the empire; in his excessive jealousy of the prerogatives of his power he had tried to keep all the threads of the administration in his own hands, but he had been compelled to delegate the greater portion of the real work to men whose docile mediocrity and absolute submission could give him no umbrage. He only

kept a close watch over the police, the diplomatic agents, and the army, which were, it is true, in his eyes, the only essential organs of government. The despatch of current affairs was entrusted to the Secretary of State, Maret, who was authorised to examine the ministerial portfolios and prepare such decisions as were indispensable, and who presented the elements for them in the light that suited him best. An indefatigable worker, of a yielding and easy temper, without any settled principles or any views of his own, but possessing a thorough knowledge of the routine of business and of the weakness of his master, this perfect bureaucrat spared Napoleon the fatigue of a study, the weight of which would have overwhelmed him in the midst of his multifarious occupations. Under pretence of simplifying affairs, he deprived him by degrees of all control over them, and left him scarcely anything more than the signing of decrees which he had himself drawn up.

If Maret had been actuated by any preference for a particular system, or even by a love of power, this kind of clandestine usurpation might have proved dangerous to him, but as he only sought to satisfy a coterie that was more eager for lucrative places than influence in the state, and as he possessed in a rare degree that kind of merit that Napoleon appreciated the most in his servants—zeal and devotion—the favour that he enjoyed only increased with time. It was nevertheless very detrimental to the administration of affairs that the instrument ruled under the name of the master, and that the empire was governed by a man whose capacity did not exceed that of a first-rate clerk. We may believe Savary's testimony on this point, one of the blindest admirers of Napoleon, although his criticism may have arisen rather from envy than sincere judgment. He deplores the influence obtained by Maret at this period, and adds: 'The Emperor was induced to believe that the people of Paris said they could not understand his activity, that it was impossible to deceive him in the smallest thing, that he read everything. Base adulation, that was attended with sad consequences! . . . This manner of working began at Warsaw. It was too convenient to the Emperor, who

heard nothing of the complaints it excited, and too advantageous to one who sought for power, *for it ever to be changed.*'[1]

Thus in the management of the current affairs of the country, in the settlement of matters which every day in a centralised state urgently require the eye of the master, such as administrative and judicial nominations, public works, finance, justice, the relations of private individuals with the state, the superintendence of economical interests, the work was left to inferior clerks; and Napoleon's prodigious activity, owing to the overwhelming occupations which he had created for himself abroad, procured nothing better for the country than the careless and somnolent rule of a *roi fainéant.* France was governed like a simple province of a great empire.

From time to time he showed that he was not sleeping, and set his mark upon some measure intended to make his enemies tremble or his subjects walk in the right road. Now and then he reminded them of his existence by means of instructions sent to his different agents; but the only person with whom Napoleon kept up a close correspondence at home was Fouché. Through the medium of this minister, he imagined that he had at last conquered public opinion, the imperceptible antagonist that sports with the blows that are dealt to it. In this relentless pursuit Napoleon attacked by turns the tribune, the press, the newspapers, and the salons, but, in spite of all his efforts, he never attained his end. The ironical Proteus was always there, bestowing a smile of incredulity upon his chimerical conceptions, his romance of universal domination, and his false victories. After Pultusk and Eylau, his lying bulletins deceived nobody in France; even the letters from the army proved their untruthfulness. How could he defend himself after such contradictions? He very soon suppressed all correspondence between the army and home.[2] 'Cause the following report to be spread,' he wrote to Fouché. '*Circulate it first in the salons, and publish it afterwards in the papers.*

[1] *Mémoires* du duc de Rovigo, vol. iii.

[2] This proceeding commenced at the siege of Dantzic.

The Russian army is so weakened, that there are regiments which are reduced to one hundred and fifty men. There are no more troops in Russia . . . *the Russian army is asking for peace;* they accuse several great lords of having sold the blood of the Russians for the English,' etc. [1]

Fouché did his best. He even went so far as to forge a letter, in which a Russian officer took pains to show France how completely his countrymen were beaten by our soldiers. But Napoleon was not satisfied, although he had himself, on other occasions, suggested this trick to Fouché. 'I have seen in the papers,' he wrote to him on the 27th of March following, 'a pretended letter from Russia! . . . Everything that is published to *enlighten public opinion* appears to me to be written in a bad spirit, *just as if the author felt that what he wrote was not true.*' There was perhaps a certain ingenuity in requiring the blind and persuasive faith of an apostle from Fouché. It was plainly admitting that public opinion suborned even the police themselves, whom in general nothing influenced; and if he had examined more closely, he would have found that opinion had an accomplice in their own consciences.

Public opinion was everybody. It was just this that rendered it at once so powerful and so impossible to arrest. Hence the singular and puerile irritation of Bonaparte against all persons who appeared to him to represent in any measure whatever that collective and intangible being, whom he was always pursuing without ever being able to lay hold on. The more powerless he felt against this impersonal and anonymous enemy, the heavier fell his anger upon those whom he could see and reach. Towards the end of March 1807 this conqueror, whose first levies had raised the army to more than six hundred thousand men, suddenly learned that a certain woman had been seen in the neighbourhood of Paris. It was quite enough to disturb the peace of his powerful mind. His letters were filled with invective against the woman, and reproaches for the ministers who tolerated her presence. 'I have written,' he

[1] Napoleon to Fouché, February 28.

said, in a letter to Cambacérès, 'to the minister of police, to send Madame de Staël to Geneva. . . . That woman still continues to *intrigue*. She came near Paris against my orders. She is a real *nuisance*. My intention is that you speak seriously to the minister, for *I shall be compelled to have her arrested by the gendarmery*. Keep an eye also upon Benjamin Constant. I will no longer suffer any of this clique.'[1]

Madame de Staël was exiled afresh, and Napoleon breathed again. But he could never allude to this subject without losing all his calm. One might almost say that his imagination was struck, that he had a presentiment that this noble woman, who calculated the false grandeur of the empire with such a correct judgment, would one day witness its fall, and this kind of superstitious intuition inspired him with invectives that were almost ludicrously violent. 'I am glad to see,' he wrote to Fouché, the 18th of April, 'that I hear nothing more of Madame de Staël. . . . *That woman is a bird of ill omen. She thought the tempest had already come, and was delighting in intrigues and folly. Let her go off to her Lake Leman.*' A correct and well-grounded presentiment! What omen could in fact be more inauspicious for him than this detested name? It was a name that incessantly reminded him that, in spite of his power, his seductions, and his prodigious success, there was something in the mind of his contemporaries that invincibly resisted him,—something that, with all his force, he could neither subjugate nor destroy, not even in a defenceless woman. This something, at once so powerful and so frail, so full of vitality under an appearance of death, was the sovereign master of all human things, which may sometimes suffer passing violences, but without which nothing is done here below that is great or lasting; it was the spirit of justice and liberty, his victim to-day, his conqueror to-morrow.

What is singular is that while Napoleon stifled with implacable and cowardly hatred all independent thought and lofty sentiment, he never for an instant lost sight of his project of reviving the great literary epochs. As the institution

[1] Napoleon to Cambacérès, March 26, 1807.

of the decennial prizes did not produce the effect he desired, he conceived a fresh plan. We have two long minutes from his pen at this date, relative to the encouragement to be given to letters, and the establishment of technical schools, which curiously display the disorder and incoherency of his ideas. He admits that the state is not a competent judge in this matter, that it is not its province to give places to poets, that their reward is in the approbation of the public; but at the same time he would have the *administration recommend authors to the attention* of this public. The encouragement of government had not answered so well as he had expected; he would therefore try the stimulant of an official censorship. He admired Richelieu for ordering the Academy to criticise the *Cid*. This littleness in a skilful minister appeared to him a stroke of genius. He saw in it the germ of a fruitful institution. He would imitate his example. 'It is at the Emperor's request,' he said, speaking on this subject, 'that the Institute criticises Abbé Delille's *Georgics*, not as a translation, but as a *chef-d'œuvre of language, poetry, and taste;* or one of the best cantos in Esménard's poem on *Navigation*, or one of the finest odes of Lebrun; or even, as a better proof of impartiality, one of the best pieces of poetry from the pen of Fontanes. The author criticised will perhaps at first show some ill-humour, but he will soon feel that the choice of his work is an encomium, and the public will be *interested and enlightened, and their taste improved!* . . . When once a system of judicious criticism is *regularly established*, we shall be able *to put a stop to the present mode of criticism*, or at any rate to correct its excesses. The Institute is a great power in the hands of the minister!'[1] Oh the sublimity of this universal genius! To exile Madame de Staël, and to erect the Institute into a high court of administrative criticism in order to suppress free criticism, what an ingenious way of raising French literature, what a right it gives its author to the eternal admiration of fools! When we think that these miserable ideas have for so long passed for a model of wisdom and knowledge, we cannot

[1] April 19, 1807.

restrain a certain pleasure in sounding the wooden idol to show its hollowness. It is vain for short-sighted men to deny this right to the historian; if it is true that the past is a lesson for the future, and that a nation grows enlightened and gathers strength by resolutely condemning the errors that it has committed, it is a duty to disclose the emptiness of the illusions that have led it astray.

The instructions which Napoleon dictated the same day on the teaching of geography and history are far more sensible, though in these too the narrow anxiety which he manifested in everything is also revealed. Independent of his preference for military history, we see that he wished history to be made a mere chronicle of dates and facts, a sort of anatomy of events, stripped of everything from which a meaning, a moral lesson, or a conclusion could be drawn. 'You will easily guess,' he wrote in this paper, 'that my *secret thought* is to gather together men who will write, *not philosophical history, nor religious history*, but *the history of facts*.' History without conclusions, that is to say, experience without teaching, science without generalisation, society without principles, this was in reality the impossibility that he dreamed of. He endeavoured in every way to suppress ideality, and even the very soul of things, because he felt that this higher principle was necessarily against him. Was it not he who wished Mirabeau to be spoken of without any mention being made of what had made his power and inspiration, that is to say, his ideas? At the time of Maury's reception at the Academy, the president, the Abbé Sicard, had thought fit to traduce the name of Mirabeau, and this excessive zeal had annoyed Napoleon, who wished them to abstain alike from blame and praise. 'There were things in that meeting of the Academy which did not please me,' he wrote to Fouché. 'It is not the province of the president of a learned society to speak of Mirabeau. If he must talk of him, he ought only to speak of his style: that alone is his affair.'[1] Only to speak of Mirabeau's style! It would

[1] Napoleon to Fouché, May 20. The publishers of the *Correspondance* have printed this '*il ne devait pas parles de son style*,' which has no sense.

be much the same as if posterity were only to speak of Napoleon's spelling. Fouché had orders 'to praise' Mirabeau in order to strike a balance, as if the glory of a great man depended on the speeches of an academy or the justifications of a minister of police!

The means which Napoleon conceived to revive industry and commerce were scarcely more efficacious than the encouragement that he proposed for literature. He had first asked the Council of State to institute an inquiry into the causes of the evil, and the remedy that might be applied. But could an assembly of officials be expected to give serviceable replies to such questions? The evil lay in himself. It was his mad system of conquest, of never-ending war, of universal compression; it was the continental blockade, the alarm of credit, confiscations by decree, forestalled conscriptions, sterility in all branches of production. The Council of State, greatly embarrassed by the task of removing the effects while they respected the cause, replied by a proposition, ridiculous enough under the circumstances, to furnish the palaces of the bishops and the prefectures, in order to give work to trades that were at a standstill. This luminous expedient did not suit Napoleon; but the one which he substituted for it was hardly better. He decided that a sum of 500,000 francs a month, or six millions a year, should be advanced to manufacturers who were in difficulties; the loans to be made on the condition that the factory should continue to work, and that a quantity of stock to the value of at least twice the sum lent should be deposited in a special warehouse. When Napoleon communicated this project to Cambacérès, he said: 'If this money is lent, *I suppose the loan gives me a mortgage.* If our civil laws do not insure this, pass a decree to that effect.'[1] Such was the knowledge which the great legislator, the immortal author of the code, that object of admiration of posterity, had of the laws which he was supposed to have made. But this loan, with or without a mortgage, was to lead him further than he expected. After having transformed the state into a pawnbroker and sleeping partner in

[1] Napoleon to Cambacérès, March 26, 1807.

manufactories, he had to go further and engage in commerce, for the goods deposited rapidly spoiled and had to be got rid of. Napoleon seemed at one time to have adopted this project, and to have entertained the idea of compelling the neutral vessels to export our products after having brought their own, but the only effect of this threat was to keep them away from our ports.

This assistance might have been useful in certain cases, but its inevitable publicity did the manufacturer a great injury, inasmuch as it was equivalent to a kind of declaration of bankruptcy, and it is, moreover, needless to point out its inadequacy. Six million francs to supply such a deficiency were like a drop of water to extinguish a fire. With regard to the complementary measures which Napoleon added to it, such as opening in Paris a workshop for military supplies, requesting his wife and sisters to make purchases at it, ordering his apartments in the Tuileries to be refurnished, they are expedients that might be expected from a child rather than from a statesman; and if they are generally brought forward as instances of his goodwill, they are also striking proofs of his incompetency. Such efforts could only be successful on condition that the real cause of the evils was attacked, that is to say, the insane policy which had produced them. If it is impossible to believe that Napoleon deceived himself on this point without denying him all clear-sightedness, we have the right to affirm that these calamities only touched him so far as they lessened his prestige and his popularity. He was anxious about them to a certain extent in France, because he knew what terrible strength the sufferings of the people could at a given moment communicate to the bitterness of public opinion; but among the other nations that were subject to our influence, he was as perfectly insensible to them as if the victims had been inhabitants of Saturn.

Of all these countries, Holland was the one that suffered the most, because she was neither rich in the products of her soil like Italy, nor gorged with the spoils of Europe like France. Ruined by the war, by the loss of her colonies, by the forced inaction of her navy, by the interruption of

her commercial relations, this small nation, which did not possess enough territory to maintain it, had received a last blow in the continental blockade. They were nevertheless required to support an army of more than fifty thousand men.[1] King Louis endeavoured to alienate the misery that he saw around him by his simplicity, his economy, and his respect for the manners, customs, traditions, and susceptibilities of a people, who, though weak, were justly proud of their history. That there were some mistaken measures in the reforms undertaken by this well-meaning man is evident, but he had taken his task of ruling in earnest, he wished to gain the affection of his subjects, and this was a crime that Napoleon could not pardon. Louis had refused, in spite of his brother's reiterated injunctions, to establish the conscription and fresh taxes in Holland; he had refused to sacrifice the interests of the Protestants to the Catholic minority; he had won a reputation for gentleness and kindness; he had created a few honorary posts round his throne in order to reward the zeal of two or three distinguished men. A storm had for some time been gathering over his head; an accident sufficed to make it burst. On the 12th of January a vessel laden with gunpowder exploded at Leyden, and blew up nearly eight hundred houses. King Louis, incapable in the distressed state of his finances of repairing the disaster, opened a public subscription which produced several million florins. This was enough to exasperate Napoleon. All his grievances were showered down at once in a torrent of invective and recrimination.

'Nothing is worse than *this collection* made by your orders throughout the kingdom. You govern this nation too much like a capuchin. The goodness of a king ought to be stately, and not like that of a monk. A king orders, and asks nothing of anybody. . . . I have an idea that you are *re-establishing the nobility*, and am anxious to be enlightened on this point. *Have you so completely lost your head* as to forget what you owe to me? Do you want to force me to express my great displeasure publicly? . . . Pay my troops, make a large levy of conscripts. A prince

[1] *Documents historiques sur la Hollande*, par le roi Louis.

who passes for good in the first year of his reign is a prince who is ridiculed in the second. When a king is said to be a good man his reign is an unsuccessful one. . . . The first thing that you ought to do, and that I had advised you, is to establish the conscription! . . . I offered you my counsel, and you reply by fine compliments, and continue to *commit acts of folly!* . . . Your quarrels with the queen also reach the public. . . . You treat a young wife as you would treat a regiment. . . . You have the best *and most virtuous* of wives, and you make her miserable. Let her dance as much as she likes, she is at the age for it. My wife is forty; from the field of battle I write to her to go to balls, and you want a woman of twenty to live in a cloister, or to be always washing her child, like a nurse! You have too virtuous a wife; if she were a coquette she would lead you by the nose!'[1]

It is very probable that in this torrent of reproaches there was more than one that was well founded. And what man would not have laid himself open to some, in the difficult situation in which Louis was placed, as a husband married in spite of himself and a king compelled to receive a crown which he did not want? But if this was the *régime* to which Napoleon subjected *these independent though vassal kingdoms* which he boasted of having created, we must say that the position of king under such a master was the last that a man would have accepted who had any sense of his own dignity. The insult with which Napoleon overwhelmed poor Louis with regard to Queen Hortense, while he proposed to him for an example his own conduct towards Josephine, is the more singular, because his connection with the Countess V——, a Polish lady, celebrated for her beauty and her devotion, had been publicly talked about for several months, and was known to every one. The strength of this passion had even been greatly exaggerated; it was spoken of as the cause of his recent failures, and it was openly said that he had found Capua in Poland.

History has no need to have recourse to the indiscreet

[1] Napoleon to the king of Holland, April 4, 1807.

disclosures of a *valet-de-chambre* on this point;'[1] all the contemporary memoirs speak of the connection. Savary, among others, says in the troubadour style of the time that 'the Emperor, like his officers, paid tribute to the beauty of the Polish women. He could not resist the charms of one of them; he loved her tenderly, and met with a noble return.' The rumour of this romance reached Paris. Josephine was greatly distressed, and earnestly entreated permission to go to Warsaw. Hence the quantity of stereotyped letters which we find in the *Correspondence* of Napoleon, and of which the meaning would appear somewhat enigmatical, did we not know that they were written with a view to tranquillise his alarmed wife by the most tender declarations, and to deter her from the journey that she wanted to undertake: 'Keep up your spirits; live contented and happily; do not be sad. I love you; I think of you; I long for you. But do not come.' Such an affair was common enough, and we feel that there is very little that is interesting to be found in these chronicles of the alcove, especially at a period in which connections of this kind were carried on in open daylight; but is it not characteristic that it was at this very moment, when he was living in double adultery with another man's wife, that he ventured to mention himself to his brother as a model husband?

Among the acts for which Louis was reproached was his refusal to grant that influence to the Catholics which Napoleon demanded for them. In this the Emperor was certainly not actuated by any thought of an impossible restoration; but he believed he could make partisans, and he exaggerated the relative importance of the Catholic element in Holland. He wanted to have the Catholics for instruments, but he had no intention of yielding them one jot of his power. Ever since his disputes with the Court of Rome, he had closely watched the clergy and had his eye open to all their encroachments. We have a letter from him, written on the 5th of March in the same year, in reply to a request from the bishops of his empire with regard to the celebration of the Sunday, which is excellent in every

[1] *Mémoires* de Constant, etc.

point. These venerable prelates had thought that they could take advantage of his absence to usurp authority in a matter which they had very much at heart. He very clearly points out all the iniquity of their claims.

'It is contrary to divine law,' he said, 'to prevent a man, who has wants on the Sunday as well as on the other days of the week, from working to gain his bread. The Government could not pass such a law, unless they gave bread to those who have none. . . . Was it not Bossuet who said *Mangez un bœuf et soyez chrétien?*'

He very rightly makes a great distinction between laws that are really religious and obligations that have been devised merely to extend the authority of the priests. 'Society,' he adds, 'is not composed of a contemplative order. Some legislators have tried to make it *an association of monks*, and to apply to it regulations that are only fit for the cloister. . . . We must take care. If this concession is made, the priests will not fail to require others. If once the Government were made to interfere in matters which are not within its province, we should soon be brought back to those miserable periods in which the curés thought they had a right to rebuke a citizen who did not go to mass.' What a pity that in making such just criticisms on the absolute authority of the Catholics he refused to see how applicable they were to his own government! No, it might have been replied, society is not made for a convent, nor is it made for a barrack. Did he not make not only the interests but even the opinions of the citizens subordinate to the Government, which according to him had no right to interfere in the observance of Sunday? Did he not wish it to think, to act, and even to feel for them? Did he not dream of making the State an infallible authority, and the Institute a sort of lay inquisition, which should enforce orthodoxy even in literary criticism? Between religious Cæsarism which is the ideal of the Romish doctrine, and political Cæsarism which was the foundation of his system, there was only a nominal difference. It was two aspects of the same idea, two emanations of the same spirit; and if he mistrusted the first, it was because he had discovered in it a danger for the second.

CHAPTER VIII

CAMPAIGN OF FRIEDLAND—INTERVIEW OF TILSIT

(*June*, *July*, 1807)

NAPOLEON spent the months of March, April, and May in the midst of these various occupations, while his military preparations were executed with an accord and precision which formed a striking contrast to the slow and disconnected operations of the coalesced armies. Of the first levies, amounting to a hundred and sixty thousand men, some had been sent into Normandy and Brittany, to replace the old troops which he had withdrawn from these provinces; some into Italy, to increase Boudet's and Molitor's divisions, which were called to the Elbe, and the rest were distributed among the twenty new regiments of infantry, and the ten regiments of cavalry, with which he had reinforced his army. This distribution indicates the movement which he impressed on the immense mass of men of which he disposed. Warned by his check at Eylau and by the doubtful attitude of Austria, he had felt the danger of his isolation. At such a distance from what may be called his natural reserves, while he increased their strength he had also changed their centre. From France, from Italy, and from Holland, he had sent them as far as the Elbe. Germany was deluged with them.

Independent of Mortier's *corps d'armée*, which had been rendered available by the truce with the Swedes, and of Lefebvre's corps, which the capitulation of Dantzic had set free, we had in Germany an army of observation of nearly

a hundred thousand men,[1] composed of the Dutch, Spanish, Italian, Bavarian, Würtemberg, and Saxon contingents, the old and the new levies, to which he added several French divisions, and very soon after the forces of our army in Silesia now released. This army was placed under the command of Marshal Brune. It occupied the north of Germany from Hamburg to Stettin, keeping the English and the Swedes in check on one side, and Austria on the other. It served as a *point d'appui* for the one which Napoleon had kept under his own orders, and of which he had just raised the effective force to its full complement. This second army, which was the active army, now numbered nearly a hundred and seventy thousand men. He had repaired their losses, and remounted the cavalry with the greatest care. Abundantly provided with supplies, owing to the number of strong places which had fallen into our hands, it was now much more formidable than at the opening of the campaign.

This time, so well employed by Napoleon, had been spent by the coalesced army in vain demonstrations, or in preparations disproportioned to the end they proposed to attain. After their vexatious defeat before Constantinople, the English had thrown themselves upon Egypt, but they gained nothing there, and were beaten after a short and useless occupation of Alexandria. The expeditions which they undertook against Buenos Ayres, and other colonies of the French or of their allies, were not for the most part more successful. They did not advance the common cause, and had only served to exasperate Russia, who was already wounded by their refusal to guarantee a loan of six millions sterling.[2] On the other hand, they neglected the only diversion which could have been advantageous to their allies, the landing, which had been planned, but was always postponed, of an expeditionary corps on the coasts of the Baltic, to relieve both Stralsund

[1] This is the estimate which Napoleon gives in a letter to Brune, May 30, 1807, including the Poles and the army of Silesia.

[2] In January 1807. Letter from Lord Howick to Mr. Douglas, January 13.

and Dantzic. The only attempt to come to the assistance of the defenders of Dantzic during the whole course of the siege was made by the Russians; but they did not employ sufficient forces. Their troops were obliged to re-embark after having sustained considerable losses, and the place capitulated after fifty days of firing from the trenches.

This siege, which had in the beginning been extremely difficult, gained Lefebvre the title of Duke of Dantzic, a distinction which awarded to this old accomplice of the eighteenth Brumaire the honour of an exploit of which all the merit belonged to Chasseloup and Lariboisière (May 24). Shortly after, Neisse and Glatz in Silesia fell. Bennigsen saw the last positions which he occupied in our rear give way one after another, and still their danger never suggested to him the idea of hastening his attack, so as to profit by the embarrassment which they created for us, nor did their fate even make him understand the necessity of prudence. He had on his side received important reinforcements during the three months of inaction, but these reinforcements were very inferior to ours. Alexander had sent him his guard, *the sacred troops*, as they were called in St. Petersburg. 'Be a credit to yourselves, brothers,' exclaimed the emperor, when he took leave of his soldiers; and with one voice they replied: 'We will do all that is possible. Farewell, Lord!' One division had left with the guard, which had raised Bennigsen's effective force to about a hundred and twenty-five thousand men, including the Prussians and the corps which had remained upon the Narew. A reserve corps of thirty thousand men, under the orders of Prince Labanoff, was marching to join them. This marked inferiority, especially after the opportunity of striking a useful blow during the siege of Dantzic had been lost, ought to have suggested a system of temporisation, which the Russian generals did not adopt till 1812, and Bennigsen seems to have been tempted for an instant to follow it, at least if we may believe an expression which he is reported to have made use of at St. Petersburg. 'I want,' he said, '*to file at* (*limer*) Bonaparte.'[1] These tactics would

[1] De Maistre, *Correspondance diplomatique*, March 1807.

have been the more advantageous, because his troops had much more firmness than mettle, and were superior in homogeneousness and strength of resistance to the great cosmopolitan army that was preparing to invade their territory.

But he would have had to abandon the intrenched camp of Heilsberg, and to sacrifice the rich stores of Königsberg, and nothing is more difficult in war than to keep to a prudent system, especially after a triumph, and with soldiers inured to hardships and animated by the hope of victory. With the choice of attacking us, or retiring successively behind the Pregel and the Niemen, Bennigsen could not resist the temptation of again taking up the offensive, and this time as before it was the hope of surprising Ney's corps which suggested to him the idea. Our troops had remained in their positions upon the Passarge, from Braunsberg where Bernadotte was encamped, to Hohenstein where Davoust was quartered. Farther south, towards Omuleff, was Masséna, whom Napoleon had recalled from Italy, and not far from him, at Neidenburg, Zajonchek with twenty thousand Poles. In the centre, from Osterode to Liebstadt, were the corps of Lannes and Soult, supported by Mortier's corps which kept a little farther back towards the Lower Vistula. Ney alone at Guttstadt occupied an advanced position beyond the Passarge and at a little distance from Heilsberg, where Bennigsen's intrenched camp was situated.

This isolated position in the midst of forests which concealed the movements of the enemy, exposed Ney's corps to serious perils. Bennigsen resolved to surprise it, in order to take advantage of the disorder into which this bold stroke would throw our cantonments. On the 5th of June the Russian army unexpectedly attacked us on several points at once. Two of these attacks, that of Spanden and of Lomitten, were only demonstrations, intended to keep in check Bernadotte's and Soult's detachment which lined this side of the Passarge. The others, directed with more considerable forces upon Ney's left at Wolfsdorf, upon his right at Guttstadt, and upon his rear at Bergfried, were undertaken in the hope of cutting him off from the rest of

the army. It was an admirably conceived plan, and the sudden assault placed Marshal Ney from the outset in imminent peril; but Bennigsen, badly served by his lieutenants, Sacken and Gortschakoff, in an operation which required a great deal of harmony, precision, and rapidity, saw all his efforts fail before the calmness and intrepidity of his adversary. On the 5th of June, while our detachments held their ground at Spanden and Lomitten, Ney, attacked by triple forces, retrograded as far as Ankendorf, but he did it step by step still opposing the Russians. The next day, the 6th, he reached Deppen, and was able to retire behind the Passarge, after having given fresh battle, in order to insure this difficult retreat which was so glorious for him.

When once this first battle was lost, it was the Russian turn to retrograde, for the whole of the French army, rapidly rallied by Napoleon, marched on to drive them back and had already outflanked their right. Bennigsen regained Heilsberg and resolved to give battle there, hoping that a strong concentration and the defences of his intrenched camp would supply the deficiency of number. It was from there that he saw the corps of Soult, Lannes, Davoust, and Murat's guard and cavalry, successively emerge during the day of the 10th. The strong rear-guard which Bennigsen had left behind him to cover the approaches of his intrenched camp was attacked with impetuosity by our advance-guard, and compelled to retire after a vigorous and sanguinary resistance. But our troops did not reach the foot of the enemy's intrenchments till towards nine o'clock in the evening. The intrenched camp of Heilsberg, situated upon both sides of the Alle, of which we only occupied the left bank, offered great advantages to the Russian army, by permitting them to operate on either bank as they chose, but it had the inconvenience of dividing them in two, and Napoleon flattered himself that he could turn this natural obstacle to account and take each half of the camp separately. Profiting accordingly by the enthusiasm of his soldiers, he ordered an attack to be made immediately on the intrenchments on the left bank by Soult's and Lannes' corps, sup-

ported by Murat's guard and cavalry. Soult first rushed forward, but received by a murderous fire, and charged by the Russian cavalry, he endeavoured in vain to take these strong positions. Murat and Lannes advanced in their turn, without being more successful. General Legrand alone captured a redoubt, and established himself in it with a regiment, but he was overwhelmed with grape shot and was very soon forced to evacuate it. At last the guard intervened to extricate two of our divisions. The battle which had commenced by a triumph ended in a defeat that was not dangerous, but very sanguinary. The useless slaughter continued far into the night, and Soult's corps especially sustained enormous losses. We left from eight to ten thousand men dead or wounded at the foot of the fortifications of Heilsberg, while the Russians owing to the superiority of their positions scarcely lost more than half this number.

The next day Napoleon, instead of again storming the intrenchments of Heilsberg, determined to overthrow this position by turning it, feeling convinced that the mere fear of seeing himself outstripped at Königsberg would suffice to induce Bennigsen to decamp. He accordingly marched upon Landsberg, running the risk of having his communications cut off, which he could do without danger, seeing the superiority of his forces over those of his adversary. Bennigsen immediately abandoned Heilsberg, which could no longer serve him as a basis of operations for want of sufficient supplies,[1] and removed to the right bank of the Alle after having burned the bridges. During the 11th, 12th, and 13th of June, the two armies descended the river in parallel lines; but the Russians were obliged to follow the windings, while our *corps d'armée* which were the farthest in advance gained the north by more direct roads, and reconnoitred as far as Königsberg. Murat and Davoust were threatening this place, driving before them Lestocq and the Prussians, who had preceded them there. Soult had advanced as far as Kreutzberg, in order to sup-

[1] This is the reason which he himself gives in his Report of June 11, 1807.

port their movement. Lannes was at Domnau. At some distance behind him, before and beyond Eylau, came Mortier's and Ney's corps, the guard with Napoleon, and Victor in the place of Bernadotte, who had been wounded at Spanden. Such was the position of our army on the 13th of June. On the other side of the Alle, the Russian army was marching near Friedland. Napoleon's sole desire at this moment was to take Königsberg before the arrival of Bennigsen. All his orders were to this effect. He did not doubt that the appearance of Soult together with Davoust and Murat would decide the town to surrender. He thought Bennigsen was retreating fast, and never for a moment supposed that he intended to attack us. He had, however, ordered Lannes to occupy Friedland, which was with Wehlau the only point at which the Russians could debouch for attack.

But the improbable was found to be the true, and Bennigsen's imprudence afforded Napoleon, who dreamed of nothing of the kind, an opportunity of gaining one of his most brilliant victories. Bennigsen was covered by the Alle; he could by descending this river reach the Pregel in safety, and if Königsberg offered us ever so slight a resistance, arrive there in time to give us battle. What motive could have induced him to recross to the left bank of the Alle, to attack us there? Various reasons have been given for the Russian general's sudden determination. It has been said that he hoped by taking the shortest road to reach Königsberg before us. But how can we admit that he could have expected to pass a whole army by the way, and outstrip them? In his letters to the Emperor Alexander he only alleges in justification the necessity of protecting himself from an attack on his left. The French, he said, showed an intention of marching upon Friedland and Wehlau, in order to cut him off from the Pregel. He consequently sent his infantry to take possession of Friedland, so that his troops might rest in security. The infantry was attacked; he supported it, and was gradually drawn into a general action. The explanation is not very plausible, for it is certain that our army was marching upon Königsberg

and not upon Friedland and Wehlau. It is more probable that the dispersion of our *corps d'armée* suggested to him the idea of a flank attack, which might have been successful if it had been made with more vigour and decision.

Be this as it may, a detachment of Russians occupied Friedland on the evening of the 13th of June, after having driven out the regiment of hussars which Lannes had sent to take possession of the town. On the 14th, at three o'clock in the morning, the Russians began to debouch upon the plain which it overlooks. The troops that successively passed over to the left bank of the Alle can scarcely be estimated at more than fifty-five to sixty thousand men.[1] This was a sufficient number to beat one by one those of our corps which were in the vicinity; but it was important not to leave them time to concentrate. The attack ought to have been made with that overwhelming rapidity of which only Bonaparte was capable; for when once united, our forces were superior to those of the Russians, who had moreover the serious disadvantage of fighting with a river behind them. These *corps d'armée*, still scattered between Eylau and Friedland, numbered at least between eighty thousand and ninety thousand men. They comprised those of Lannes, of Ney, of Mortier, of Victor, and the guard. Lannes occupied the village and the woods of Posthenen, near Friedland. It was easy to defeat this isolated corps before the arrival of Mortier, who was nearest to it; and as proof that in war execution is everything, the situation in which Bennigsen was about to meet with a defeat was precisely the same in which Napoleon was himself placed at Jena, where he obtained one of his finest victories. There we had also to fight with our backs against a river and a kind of gulf; but instead of leaving our enemies time to meet and to concentrate, instead of

[1] Their reports say 46,000 men, a number that cannot be accepted any more than the exaggerations of their adversaries. Our calculation is made by reckoning the whole of the forces that had entered upon the campaign, and deducting, first, the corps left on the Narew; second, Lestocq's corps and Kamenski's division, which had been sent to Königsberg; third, the troops left upon the right bank; fourth, the losses sustained in the previous battles.

crossing the Saale on the morning of the battle and before the eyes of the Prussians, Napoleon had crossed it during the night, so as to be able to attack them from the outset with his united forces. Bennigsen on the contrary spent a great part of the morning in passing over the bridges of the Alle; he was obliged to leave more than half his artillery on the opposite bank. He only engaged his divisions successively; he attacked Lannes feebly and disconnectedly, and he consequently left the other corps sufficient time to come to his assistance.

Lannes, intrenched at Posthenen, sustained the first assault of the Russians with an energy that was the more meritorious on account of his great inferiority. As soon as he recognised the danger of his position, he sent estafette after estafette to Napoleon. The Emperor could not believe Bennigsen capable of such rashness; he thought he merely meant to make a demonstration. But the number of troops which the Russians deployed on the left bank of the river increased every hour. Their general, not knowing how precious the time was, and being in no hurry to seize a prey which in his presumption he thought could not escape him, seemed more anxious to establish himself and take possession of the field of battle than to make Lannes' corps prisoners. A part of his troops had taken up their position in the almost acute angle which the Alle forms in winding round the town of Friedland; the rest extended to the right in the direction of Heinrichsdorf, as if to close in the more easily upon their feeble adversary. But Mortier's corps and Grouchy's and Nansouty's cavalry had already come to Lannes' assistance, and the task was rendered more difficult. They impetuously charged the Russian line, broke it and established themselves at Heinrichsdorf after a resolute struggle. It was evident, however, that they could not remain there unless they were vigorously supported. They had great difficulty in resisting the masses that attacked them on all sides, and it was plain that in another instant they would be crushed. It was at this decisive moment that Napoleon arrived at Posthenen with Ney's guard, closely followed by Victor's corps, and it

is a significant proof of the incredible indecision of his adversary, that he had the time to survey the two armies, and dictate his dispositions for the battle, as he would have done at the beginning of the combat. It was in reality a second battle that was about to begin. Mortier formed our extreme left at Heinrichsdorf and beyond it; he was to decline the attacks of the enemy so as to draw him farther on in the plain. Lannes was posted in the centre, between Posthenen and Heinrichsdorf. At his right were concentrated both Ney's and Victor's corps and the guard, to whom Napoleon reserved the task of striking the blow that was to decide the day. The Russians, who were much stronger than ourselves in the morning, but now much weaker, could only escape by a precipitate retreat over the bridges of Friedland. This was the point then on which we were to direct all our efforts, for when once these bridges were occupied or destroyed, their army was at our mercy. It was Ney whom Napoleon ordered to carry them at any price, by rushing headlong upon Friedland.

It was half-past five in the evening when the marshal started with his troops, protected by a formidable artillery which sent its fire in the direction of the town. On emerging from the wood in which they had been placed in ambush, his columns were charged by the Russian cavalry, but Latour-Maubourg rushed forward with his dragoons and drove them back. At the same time Sénarmont, who commanded Victor's artillery, advanced it by a stroke of daring nearly four hundred paces closer to the Russian line, which he routed with his cannon in the narrow space in which it was deployed. Ney boldly continued his march. Close to a pond which is formed under the walls of the town by a stream called the mill-stream, he was unexpectedly attacked by the Russian guard, to whom this post had been confided. Bisson's division could not resist these choice troops, who charged them with the bayonet. They were led back in disorder; the rest wavered. Ney's column was in great peril. It fell back half-broken. Fortunately General Dupont saw the danger. He rushed

forward in his turn with his division, surprised and broke through the Russian guard, and then drove them towards Friedland after a real massacre. Ney rallied his troops, and with his united forces rushed upon the flaming town, in pursuit of the dismayed Russians. Resistance was no longer thought of. Each tried to save himself. It was a frightful pell-mell of soldiers of all arms, crushing each other as they flew to the only issue that was open to them. Some of the fugitives succeeded in gaining the bridges; others were thrown into the Alle, in which they were drowned.

While Ney was achieving the work of destruction which gave us the victory, Lannes and Mortier, who had hitherto confined themselves to keeping back the Russian right, which was commanded by Prince Gortschakoff, began to press more closely upon it. The prince had received somewhat late an order from Bennigsen to retreat, and had not obeyed. He now found himself between Friedland—where the bridges were burned—and the strong semicircle that Lannes and Mortier had formed round him. Nevertheless neither he nor his troops thought of surrender. While his last battalions were prolonging the defence, he led his cavalry in despair along the banks of the Alle, which his soldiers at length forded. Favoured by the night, they succeeded in escaping.

The Russians lost at Friedland in killed and wounded nearly twenty thousand men. The French army scarcely lost half this number.[1] Bennigsen gained the Pregel in all haste, and from thence Tilsit, where he was joined by Lestocq and Kamenski who had evacuated Königsberg on

[1] This is of course only a rough estimate. The lies of the bulletins, both French and Russian, are so great, that it is impossible to arrive at even relative truth. Napoleon reckoned the number of Russians killed at eighteen thousand, that of the French at five hundred. The Russian reports only estimated their total loss at eight thousand men. They affirmed that they had only lost sixteen pieces of cannon; Napoleon said a hundred and twenty. Compare the seventy-ninth and eightieth bulletins, Bennigsen's report to the Emperor Alexander, Plotho, Jomini, Mathieu Dumas, Robert Wilson, and the *Mémorial du dépôt de la guerre*, vol. viii.

hearing of the victory of Friedland. On the 19th of June the Russian army retired behind the Niemen, after having destroyed the bridge of Tilsit. The territory of the empire was still untouched, Prince Labanoff's corps had effected their junction, and the Niemen offered Bennigsen a strong line of defence, but his troops were discouraged, and the exhausted state of the monarchy was revealed by a significant circumstance. Our soldiers, who had rushed to the edge of the river in pursuit of the Russians, perceived on the opposite bank some Baskirs and Calmucks armed with arrows, a proof to what extremities the empire was reduced. Alexander asked for an armistice. Napoleon proposed an interview, which was accepted. The question has been raised whether the proposition came from Napoleon or from Alexander. If it were not proved that it was made by Duroc in the name of his sovereign, we should still settle the question *à priori* in the affirmative, so completely is this step conformable to the character and habits of Napoleon. He knew from experience the sort of fascination that he excercised over men that were but little capable of judging him; he had even begun to exaggerate this singular power from having used it with such extraordinary success in so many circumstances of his life. He almost considered it as infallible, and in the effect which he produced he no longer made any allowance for what was caused by fear and flattery, but attributed it all to the prestige created by his marvellous fortune. A personal interview with Alexander offered him, in lieu of the indirect and remote influence which he could exercise over a congress, an opportunity of concentrating on a single man, on whom everything depended, that power of seduction with which nature had endowed him, and which would have been an incomparable art if it had been less apparent. He took care not to lose so precious a chance.

The Emperor Napoleon had neither modified his projects nor his policy. Versatile to an almost incredible extent with regard to the choice of means, and ready to change them with circumstances, he pursued his end with all the tenacity of a fixed idea. In reality his great object

had never for an instant ceased to be England, because he justly felt that there was the true centre of continental resistance. At the commencement of the war he had taken for his programme 'to conquer England on the Continent.' This programme had been half carried out; for if he could not flatter himself that he had vanquished England, he had disarmed the Continent. The Russians, driven back upon their own frontier and placed almost *hors de combat*, could attempt nothing against him. It was dangerous to think of conquering Russia, for if the European powers were already subdued, they were still quivering. But it was perhaps not impossible to gain her support; if so, what a magnificent simplification for Napoleon's projects! That ally which he had felt somewhat late the necessity of finding among the European states,—which in his distress before and after Eylau he had by turns sought in Austria and Prussia, powers mutilated and weakened by him, and consequently very doubtful friends,—was here personified in a young and ambitious state, which from its very distance had no real and direct opposition of interests with France. If this ally were gained, all Europe would bow down before him, and instead of having to fight England *on the Continent*, Napoleon would be able to fight England *with the Continent*, which would be wholly enlisted under his banner. And when once England was crushed, what power would be able to resist him? What he perceived beyond was no longer the conquest of Europe, it was the empire of the world.

Alexander's feelings were rather those of discouragement than hope. He was humiliated by his sudden defeat, disgusted with his ungrateful office of European mediator, weary of his disinterestedness so ill rewarded, and above all dissatisfied with his old allies. England had done nothing to support him; she had only thought of herself. The weak successors of Fox had not perceived that, in allowing their allies to be crushed and the common cause to be jeopardied, for the sake of seizing a few colonies, they exposed their country to the greatest danger that it had ever incurred. As for Austria, she had only offered a

useless mediation at a time when a diversion made by her army would have saved all. Prussia alone had brought Alexander a courageous and faithful co-operation, but it had been of no service. Was this the reward for the numberless sacrifices which he had made for the independence of all? Had Russian territory or the national honour for a moment been threatened? No, all that Alexander had done, he had done with chivalrous and disinterested views, in the belief that it was for the general good, for European public right, for civilisation; and if the illusions of youth and self-love had had any influence over his determinations, they had at least been pure from all selfish and narrow ambition. Was it not time to think of the interests of his crown, of the welfare and security of his subjects? to give up his utopias, the philanthropic dreams by which he had been beguiled?

Nothing could have been more dangerous for Alexander, and especially for the cause which he had hitherto defended, than such feelings at the moment of coming in contact with the powerful tempter who was extending his hand, for these sentiments were exactly such as Napoleon would have wished to suggest to him. His principal object had always been to flatter and encourage such repentance and such ambition, whenever he had tried to induce a power to accept his system. It had been so with England at the time of the famous interview with Lord Whitworth; it had been so with Prussia when he offered her Hanover; with Russia when he had dazzled the credulous Emperor Paul by his false promises. It was in this way also that he had acted with Alexander himself, when, the day before Austerlitz, endeavouring to win over Prince Dolgorouki, he had exclaimed: 'Well! let Russia extend her frontier at the expense of her neighbours!' This suggestion had then been rejected with disdain, and even after Austerlitz Alexander had refused to listen to it. But things were changed since then. His adversary's fortune had only been increased by the obstacles that had been placed in his way. Nothing had withstood him; nothing either of old systems or of new ideas. Pitt had died of grief; Nelson had fallen

in his last victory; Fox had been laughed to scorn, and was dead; the Prussian monarchy had been swept away in a day; in France all opposition had been destroyed. Rights, liberty, virtue, genius, all had bowed before him, all had given way to him. Was not this a sign of destiny, a proof that this unprecedented domination was in the force of things, and was it not better to share it than to be ruined in braving it?

The first words which the two emperors exchanged, after having embraced each other as they set foot on the raft at Tilsit, showed Napoleon how much Alexander's feelings had changed since Austerlitz. 'I hate the English as much as you do yourself,' said the Czar. 'If that is the case,' replied Napoleon, 'peace is made.' All Alexander's ill-will, all his disappointment, was contained in this simple phrase; and for Napoleon also it held the knot of all the questions which he had to discuss with Alexander. Compared with this principal object, the surrender of the English alliance, everything else was secondary. If once Alexander were induced to side against England, he could easily be persuaded to abandon the other powers on the Continent; he would become the ally of France, who would have an interest in removing all obstacles, and if he still had any scruples left, they could be quieted by giving him a large share of profits.

The first interview lasted for two hours. The two sovereigns found so much advantage in it, that they agreed to neutralise the town of Tilsit, in order to continue the conversation at their leisure. The king of Prussia hastened there to plead his own cause which was in great peril, and very feebly defended by his powerful friend. This unfortunate king, the victim of his own uprightness—for he had not declared war on us till he was driven to extremities by our iniquitous proceedings — embarrassed them both. He reminded Alexander of promises and engagements that were difficult to keep, and Napoleon of his odious violations of the rights of nations. Despoiled of all his kingdom with the exception of Memel, abandoned by courtiers who are always driven away by bad fortune, he was an importunate

witness to an intimacy to which he was not admitted. His anxious face saddened this sort of honeymoon of a friendship which was never to end. They were irritated with him for it, and took little pains to conceal their annoyance. The day was spent in reviews, military *fêtes*, and banquets, at which the officers of the two armies exchanged their insignia in token of friendship. When night came, the two emperors shut themselves up to treat of their affairs together.

Alexander appeared delighted at this familiarity with the hero of so many terrible exploits. This sovereign, who was only twenty-eight years of age, possessed with a noble and benevolent expression of countenance the distinguished manners of a gentleman of the end of the eighteenth century,—a type that has since disappeared, in which natural ease was united with a lofty bearing to a degree that will perhaps never be found again. To this perfect courtesy of manners and language he joined the careless gracefulness of the Eastern nations, the almost feminine refinement and flexibility which give so great a charm to the Slav character. Nothing certainly could form a more complete contrast to Napoleon at this period of his career. Grave, reserved, and silent as he was at the time of his début, he, now that he had no longer to impose any restraint upon himself, spoke very loud and used many gestures. He expressed the most decided and absolute opinions with extreme volubility, and with an eloquence which he had created for himself, that was full of imagination, of glow, and of fire, but that was also unequal and incoherent. None knew better than he how to be by turns flattering and imperious, insinuating and haughty. But he had no moderation; whichever character he assumed, he assumed completely, as a man accustomed to dazzle, to subdue, to be always acting. He consequently easily became pompous when he wanted to be dignified, and vulgar when he wanted to be simple, often introducing a harlequin's trick in the midst of a tirade after Talma. There was no doubt a powerful seduction in his language, but it was a kind of armed speech which made his interlocutor suspicious, and

overwhelmed without persuading him. The artifice, the calculation, the intention of laying hold of his opponent and drawing him along by the abundance, the accumulation, and impetuosity of his ideas were all too evident, and the result was that his conversation was most frequently only a long monologue. Men came away from the interview astonished, silenced, but not convinced. His natural violence was betrayed at every instant by vehement gesticulations and hasty expressions. What he wanted most was ease. He had none of the coolness, the simple and calm dignity, of a man who is master of himself, who says plainly what he means, and who knows what is due to others. This sublime player had one great defect in his style of acting—he allowed the immense contempt he felt for humanity to be too clearly seen. The courtesy that gives such a charm to social intercourse does not depend on insinuating manners, it is based upon respect for others; and when this respect is not felt, the great art is to be able to feign it. Macaulay, in comparing Napoleon to Cæsar, very rightly says that Cæsar was greatly his superior on one point, he was a *perfect gentleman.* Talleyrand wittily expressed nearly the same thing when he said, 'What a pity that such a great man should have been so badly brought up!' If we may judge, not from the reports of his enemies, but from the disclosures of his most faithful and devoted servitors, Napoleon treated those who were admitted into his intimacy with a familiarity that no man who had any self-respect would have tolerated for a minute. Meneval, his former secretary, represents him as pulling the ears of his interlocutors, sometimes hard enough to make the blood flow, giving them a slap on the cheek, at times even sitting down on their knees. These acts of graciousness were marks of special kindness with him, and men of the highest rank were proud of such tokens of favour. Such habits were calculated to produce stiffness in his manners with strangers. He was too familiar when he wished to please, and too stiffly declamatory when he wished to command respect.

As to his body, the fatigues of war had strengthened his

iron constitution, and given him a stoutness bordering on embonpoint. Napoleon acknowledged that he was never better than during this hard campaign, in which he often rode thirty leagues a day over the snow. The agitations of war may be said to have become needful to his temperament, a necessity for his health, and in some sort the indispensable aliment of that immense activity which was the predominant characteristic of his nature. He literally lived on what would have killed others. War gave him both sleep and appetite. This campaign of Poland, in which he had lost fifty thousand men, had only been healthy exercise for him, and he brought back from it a most flourishing appearance. This rude health had somewhat spoilt that effigy on an antique medal, which had remained graven on the imagination since the Italian wars; it had given weight to a body which formerly seemed to be consumed by the fire of his genius, but the extraordinary restlessness of his inquisitive and penetrating eye, the incessant uneasiness of his whole person, betrayed the internal agitation of his anxious mind. A great deal of the Corsican still remained in him. He had passed through the refined civilisation, the kind of philosophical chaos, of the end of the eighteenth century, appropriating to himself with a wonderful faculty of assimilation all that could be of service to him; he had turned to account its ideas, adopted its forms and language, but in reality the primitive man had been but little modified. He had retained even certain superstitions of his countrymen, which were like stamps of his origin. He whose only religion was a faith, more often affected than real, in his star, was sometimes seen, says Meneval, suddenly to make an involuntary sign of the cross on the announcement of some great danger or some grave event. And the *naïf* secretary adds, in order to give a philosophical turn to the fact, that this gesture might be interpreted by the expression, Almighty God! Under his apparent good nature too, and his feline gracefulness of manner when he wished to appear kind, were hid the old harshness and insurmountable mistrust of the islander always on his guard against his enemies. It was noticed that during the nineteen days that the two

emperors spent together, in the midst of effusions of the tenderest friendship, Alexander took his meals every day with Napoleon, but Napoleon never once broke bread with Alexander. He displayed the same caution at the time of the interview of Erfurt. In his visits to the Czar he always presented himself surrounded by an escort, of which the number and force formed a striking contrast to the unreserved confidence of the Russian sovereign.[1]

We only know by inference a part of the secrets exchanged in these long interviews. They had for the most part no other witness than the two emperors; but the very stipulations of the treaties of Tilsit throw such a light on them that we have no need to have recourse to vain conjectures. It was the conqueror—and the fact was novel and significant—who offered the concessions, and the vanquished who accepted them! The question for Napoleon was not to dictate peace to exhausted Russia, but to gain Alexander's heart at any price, and, as he himself said in a note addressed to that sovereign, 'to pass in one moment from open war to the most friendly relations.'[2] Under the influence of the idea which governed him, and following his constant method in diplomacy as in war, of making everything give way to the principal end, Napoleon sacrificed to the young emperor the interests of our allies and the invariable traditions of French policy. He swore to Turkey that he never would make peace without her, and that he would maintain her integrity; he offered Alexander Moldavia and Wallachia, or at least he undertook to obtain them for him, and if Turkey resisted—well then the powers would divide Turkey between them! Nor was he more sparing of Persia, whom he had also drawn into this war, and upon whose alliance he had formed such gigantic dreams. His ambassador, Gardane, had scarcely arrived at Teheran before all this was changed. With regard to the Poles whom he had encouraged and so freely used, he would no longer take their country into consideration; all he would do for them should be to give Saxony the provinces

[1] De Maistre, *Correspondance diplomatique*, published by Albert Blanc.
[2] Napoleon to Alexander, July 4, 1807.

which belonged to Prussia. He even increased by two hundred thousand souls the part which fell to Russia in the spoils of this unfortunate country. Of those whom he himself called our necessary and natural allies there remained Sweden, who had been unwillingly drawn by her king into the war against France. Why should not Alexander take Finland from her? Was it fit that the fine ladies of St. Petersburg should hear the guns of Sweden from their palaces? Let him not hesitate then to spoil a prince who had for so long fought under the Russian standard! Let him learn to place his interests above his sympathies! That was the only policy worthy of a great empire. It insured certain and positive advantages to Russia, while the Quixotism of Alexander, and his plans for the regeneration of Europe, had only brought disaster. And in exchange for these immense concessions, and for the influence that would accrue from them, what was asked of him? That he should give up dreams that were proved to be chimerical; that he would remain neutral on questions which in no way affected the interests of Russia; and that he would promise Napoleon a moral support which would involve no active assistance.

Thus spoke the tempter to the young man whom he expected to dazzle, without dreaming that he was himself the dupe of his own infatuation. It was, in fact, Napoleon who lost by this alliance, of which he hoped one day alone to reap the fruit. What did Alexander give in return for the aggrandisements which were lavished on him with so much liberality? Promises and words; nothing more. He recognised the new kingdoms founded by Napoleon; but his recognition did not give them more stability. He promised to join in measures taken against England; but this was an indefinite engagement to be fulfilled much later; one that was capable of many interpretations, and that it would not be impossible to modify, if not to elude altogether. He allowed his friend the king of Prussia to be sacrificed, it was true; but it was not a complete sacrifice, it left him a fraction of his states, which might be used to recover the others. In everything he only gave the uncertain for the certain. What was ceded to him was irrevocable; what

he granted was provisional. It was Napoleon, too—and this was characteristic of the man—who fulfilled his part of the agreement the first; it was he who paid in advance. This deep searcher of the human heart seemed no longer to doubt whether the debtor would pay his debt; he appeared to have forgotten that men are inconstant, that they do not always feel bound to be eternally grateful, even when they have an interest in showing ingratitude. It never occurred to him that, after the immense advantages which had been given him, Alexander might in all sincerity make engagements which, when there was no longer anything to be gained by them, would appear very inconvenient to fulfil.

It required, therefore, no great effort of duplicity on the part of Alexander to appear seduced and enchanted by a conqueror who came to him with his hands full of presents, instead of compelling him to submit to the hard law of war. He was only asked for 'future things,' which never cost much when the equivalent is paid in ready money. For the present he discharged his duty in admiring, and in offering subtle and delicate flattery to the great man who wished to show him his plans, to open his heart to him, to teach him the secrets of his policy. Did he even then go so far as to say that the conduct of this hero towards the allies who had compromised themselves for him, and particularly towards Turkey whom he had drawn into the war, offered him an example that it would be well to meditate upon and perhaps to follow later? We may at any rate suppose that this lesson was not lost on him. What is certain is that on the authority of an acute observer who was his confidant, Alexander only brought back from this intimate and prolonged intercourse with Napoleon an impression of fear and mistrust, founded upon a very correct estimate of his character.[1]

The conditions of peace once settled and the ground fixed, it only remained to find the means of carrying them out, to arrange the manner of proceeding in order to mask in some measure in the eyes of the world the suddenness of

[1] 'Correspondence of Prince Czartorisky with Alexander,' published by Ch. de Mazade.

this prodigious change. It was agreed between the two emperors that this coalition for war should be presented to Europe under the form of steps in favour of peace. The two sovereigns were simultaneously to offer their mediation, one to England, the other to Turkey, and as they foresaw that this mediation would not be accepted, they were next to call upon the states of Europe to join their league, which would allow of their procuring advantages at the expense of those that were refractory.

Such was the spirit which dictated the famous stipulations of Tilsit. The part of the treaty which was to be made public first settled the boundaries of the new kingdom of Prussia. Napoleon, 'for the sake of his Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias,' consented to *restore* to the king of Prussia his provinces situated on the right side of the Elbe, except, however, the Polish provinces, which were given to Saxony after deducting domains estimated at twenty-six millions, of which Napoleon had already disposed in favour of his generals. He considered himself as the legitimate possessor of the Prussian states, and thus became the benefactor of the king to whom he deigned to leave anything. This clause, so humiliating in form and so hard in substance, deprived King Frederick William of more than four millions of his subjects out of nine. He tried in vain to make Napoleon adopt more moderate views, by endeavouring to prove his right and sincerity in the affair of the violation of Anspach. In this he showed that he little knew his adversary, for he could do nothing more dangerous to his interests than to prove that he had been right. If, in fact, justice was on his side, what was this conquest but brigandage? The beautiful queen of Prussia committed the same error, when in her despair she appealed to the chivalrous feelings of the man who had so cruelly insulted her in his bulletins. Napoleon himself related with coarse insinuations the useless efforts she made to move him. The only concession he made was to offer her a rose. 'At least with Magdeburg,' said the queen, in supplication. 'I beg your Majesty to observe,' he harshly replied, 'that it is I who offer it, and you who receive it.'

The treaty next stipulated the double offer of mediation with England and Turkey, and Alexander engaged to withdraw his troops immediately from Moldavia and Wallachia till the conclusion of a definite arrangement. Napoleon had introduced this last clause more out of respect for himself than out of consideration for the Porte, for he had promised Alexander that *in any case* these two principalities should be ceded to him. Moreover, a revolution had just broken out at Constantinople, as if to offer him the pretext that he needed, and relieve him even from scruples. The unfortunate Selim, who at his instigation had thrown himself into this fatal war, had been dethroned and imprisoned by the janissaries, in their jealousy of the troops, armed and equipped in European costumes, which he had organised by Napoleon's advice. This providential event was supposed to free the Emperor of the French from all his engagements towards Turkey. The treaty stated, lastly, the solemn recognition of the kings of Naples and of Holland, of the Confederation of the Rhine, and of Jérôme as king of Westphalia. This kingdom was to be formed partly of the spoils of Prussia on the left bank of the Elbe and partly with Hesse-Cassel.

To this treaty, which was to be made public immediately, were added first some additional articles, and then a treaty of alliance offensive and defensive, all to remain secret, and of which we do not even now possess the authentic text, though we know the substance. The articles stipulated the cession to France of the Ionian Isles, of the mouths of the Cattaro, the recognition of Joseph as king of Sicily, an indemnity to be furnished by Napoleon to King Ferdinand, such as the Balearic Isles or Candia. The treaty of alliance anticipated the case of the non-acceptance by England and Turkey of the mediation that was about to be proposed to them. If, as there was every reason to believe, England replied by a refusal, the two powers would immediately put half their forces in common, they would send a summons to the three courts of Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Lisbon, and this would in all probability permit Russia to lay hands on Finland and France to invade Portugal. With regard

to the court of Vienna, they did not call upon her so imperiously to pronounce, but they engaged 'to use every effort with her.' If, on her side, the Porte did not accept the offer of mediation, they would withdraw from the yoke of the Turks all the Ottoman provinces, *except Constantinople and Roumelia.* For England the refusal implied war with the whole of Europe, for Turkey the division and total overthrow of her rule.[1]

Were there in the interview of Tilsit, besides those stipulations the authenticity of which is indisputable, other contingent and verbal conventions relative to the two questions which had for so long occupied Napoleon's mind—I mean those of Rome and Spain? The fact is probable enough as far as Spain is concerned, though we cannot positively affirm it. As the family of the Bonapartes had been substituted on so many thrones for that of the Bourbons, and were reigning even in countries which had never been governed by the latter, it is not very probable that Napoleon concealed from Alexander his intention of connecting Spain with his system, and of establishing a fresh family pact between the nations of Western Europe. With regard to the temporal sovereignty of the popes, it may be said at that time to have counted for almost nothing in Europe, especially in the eyes of a schismatical emperor; it could create no difficulty between the two states, and it would have been a superfluous precaution to try to obtain the consent of a sovereign for whom it had no interest.

The immense work which had just been sketched out at Tilsit in reality only rested on hypothesis. It supposed that the Emperor Alexander would consider himself bound by eternal oaths towards a man who never kept one. It supposed that this young sovereign, who had only been momentarily drawn along by the magnificent advantages that were insured him, was for ever converted, touched by grace like St. Paul at Damascus; that he had put off the old man, forgotten his past, his ideas, his sympathies, and had suddenly changed his nature, his character, and even his

[1] Garden, *Histoire des Traités,* vol. x.; Bignon, *Histoire diplomatique;* De Clerck, *Recueil des Traités,* etc.

country, in order to become the blind slave of a policy that he had hitherto defied. It supposed that Napoleon would be faithful to his word, that he would fulfil promises that were partly verbal, that he would never repent of having concluded a dupe's bargain. It supposed, in short, that the European nations would remain quiet and contented spectators of this arbitrary upsetting of their institutions, of their habits, of their national ties, of their ancient traditions; that they would be willing to be instruments of their own oppression, that when once the armies were destroyed and the governments overthrown, everything was done, and that there was no need to pay heed to anything beyond. Public opinion, moral force, patriotic sentiments, national pride, popular traditions, love of liberty, none of these were supposed to exist. In blotting out the old geographical boundaries, they thought they had done away with nationalities, and Europe was nothing more in the eyes of her rulers than a mass of inert matter, capable of being moulded into any form they might choose to give.

Never did European liberty seem to be more urgently threatened; never did the Cæsarism which Napoleon had attempted to revive by the most insane anachronism look more likely to consolidate itself than at this moment, when it made its appearance in the world, supported on the one hand by the Muscovite Colossus, on the other by our unprecedented military power. It might have been thought that affairs were in a desperate state, that everything was lost; and yet these gigantic plans, this triumphant conception, this formidable league, was only a bugbear, a vision, a chimera. Napoleon had done no more at Tilsit than prepare the elements of fresh rivalry. He had raised up and strengthened with his own hands a more formidable antagonist for himself than any other, because it was placed beyond his reach. In each clause of this peace was hidden a clause of war. This despiser of ideology had only established at Tilsit what he himself contemptuously termed 'a fancy policy.' He had come there to deceive; he went away the dupe of his own avidity rather than of Alexander's duplicity. He had cynically betrayed his old

and faithful allies; he only brought away a doubtful and short-lived friendship. In this he did not act under the pressure of an imperious necessity, but of his own free will, with perfect consciousness of what he was doing, and only urged on by a frenzy of ambition. We have no need of any other judge than himself to determine the political value of these incautious stipulations. 'Wallachia and Moldavia,' he wrote to Alexander, February 28, 1811, 'form a third of Turkey in Europe. This is an acquisition which deprives Turkey of all her strength, and we may say, *destroys this empire, my oldest ally.* . . . Out of pure friendship for your Majesty I have recognised the union of those fine countries; but, if *I had not confidence* in the continuation of your friendship, *several very disastrous campaigns would not have induced France to see her most ancient ally despoiled.*' What could he say more severe on himself? To sacrifice an ally, and give two provinces in exchange for a friendship—the friendship of a king—was certainly novel in the annals of diplomacy. 'I have consented,' he continued, 'to your Majesty's keeping Finland, which is a third of Sweden, and which is so important a province to your Majesty, that after this union Sweden cannot be said to exist, since Stockholm is the extremity of the kingdom. Nevertheless, Sweden was also, in spite of the false policy of her king, *one of the oldest allies of France.*'

Lastly, let us see what he says about the possibility, so much contested, of reconstituting the kingdom of Poland, and the motives which led him to abandon that nation, which was also a natural ally of France. 'The ears of your Majesty are wearied with calumnious reports. I want, it is said, to re-establish Poland. *I could have done it at Tilsit.* Twelve days after the battle of Friedland, I might have been at Wilna. . . . I could have done it in 1800, at the time that the Russian troops were engaged against the Porte. *I could still do it, at the present moment.*' This was, as he himself said, all that he had done; this was the sacrifice of pride, of honour, of integrity, that he had imposed upon himself, and to what end? For what hope? Without compensation, without guarantee, without any other

return than Alexander's *friendship*,—nay, less even than that—the promise of his friendship! It may be maintained theoretically that the engagements entered into at Tilsit were reciprocal. But practically this reciprocity vanishes, for Napoleon's bonds were to be met immediately; those of Alexander fell due at a future and indefinite epoch. One gave, the other promised to do, according to the old formula of *do ut facies*, eternal source of deception. If Napoleon did not see all the disadvantage of such a part, he must have been blinded by an inconceivable fit of infatuation or passion. The truth is, he believed himself not to be gaining a friendship, but procuring an accomplice! He believed that he had completely subdued the enthusiastic Alexander, forgetting that this enthusiasm had already burned upon more than one altar. This cold, calculating man had his hour of dupery, and in this hour he had adopted the policy of sentiment. The schemer for once in his life had played the part of Don Quixote, and, as a natural consequence, his first impulse after signing the treaty of Tilsit was to infringe it.

CHAPTER IX

THE POLICY OF TILSIT—CONQUEST AND OPPRESSION OF THE NEUTRAL STATES—ORIGIN OF THE WAR WITH SPAIN

(*August–October* 1807)

NAPOLEON returned from Tilsit invested with a kind of European dictatorship. All the great states had been successively vanquished, weakened, and disarmed. Austria had lost a fourth of her territory after Austerlitz; Prussia had been almost annihilated at Jena; Russia alone remained, but she had passed under the yoke, and had accepted the condition of a complaisant auxiliary in the policy that she had so vehemently combated. The whole Continent trembled before Napoleon. Never in modern times had any sovereign had so colossal a power at his disposal. Louis XIV. had appeared upon the scene of the world surrounded by more pomp and grandeur, but he had never attained this giddy height; he had never united in his hands such an accumulation of military force. In this brilliant success, which had just thrown so much lustre over the name of Napoleon, there had doubtless been many surprises, much transitory violence done to the nature of things. The results obtained were more apparent than real: considered calmly, they seemed to defy human reason, to contradict all the laws of history; but the germs of dissolution which they bore in themselves were as yet hidden from all eyes, and what struck the sight was only the gigantic proportions of a domination that had neither limit nor precedent. Men asked themselves in anxiety what use Napoleon would make of it. Was not this in-

contestable omnipotence sufficient at last to appease his insatiable spirit? Would he know how to restrain himself, to be moderate, to be contented with ruling by influence, instead of subduing by force? Was it not time to let his exhausted soldiers rest? to think of improving the numerous institutions which had been improvised, with feverish haste, in an hour of extremity? to repair the evils of war? to try the power of gentleness and magnanimity over men? Would he not have, in the course of his sanguinary career, one moment of freedom from care? one instant of enjoyment of his own fortune, in return for the unheard-of favours that she had heaped upon him?

These hopes, which at that time began to dawn on many minds, were quickly crushed. Napoleon had not travelled the distance which separates Paris from the town of Tilsit, where he had lavished so much flattery on Alexander, before, impatient to profit by this powerful alliance, he turned his face towards the feeble states which had hitherto remained neutral, and which the submission of the great powers had just placed at his mercy. It was from Dresden that he wrote summonses to these unfortunate governments, which were now without defence. He longed to force them to quit the inoffensive position in which they had sought safety. War with England or war with France, such was the fearful alternative that he offered them. Either involved their ruin. In the impossibility of resisting him, it may be supposed that their first impulse would be to throw themselves into the arms of Napoleon, for he had only to extend his hand to destroy them, while England could only reach them through their commerce and their colonies; but the examples of Holland, of Switzerland, of Genoa, of Italy, were there to tell them what Napoleon did to his allies. This imperious injunction only left them in reality the choice of suicide. The most important of these states was Denmark, whose comparatively large fleet and strong maritime positions Napoleon resolved to make use of against England. Next came Portugal, the states of the Pope, and lastly, that kingdom of Etruria which Napoleon had sold, but never delivered, to the house of Spain in ex-

change for Louisiana, after having extorted it from the house of Austria. His resolutions were more settled as far as these three states were concerned, than with regard to Denmark, which was to a certain degree protected by distance. He determined purely and simply to appropriate them to himself, making, however, the necessary transitions.

Of all the European nations, the Portuguese had been the least mixed up in the quarrels of the Continent. They only aspired to live in peace, to develop their commercial resources, and to exchange their wines and colonial produce for the manufactures with which England furnished them. Nevertheless this pacific attitude had not preserved them from Napoleon's violence. As early as 1801, the First Consul, in order to compel the Portuguese to close their ports against the English, had drawn Spain into declaring war on them; and not only had they been obliged to yield to this unreasonable demand, but they had also had to concede the province of Olivença to Spain, and to pay us a sum of twenty-five millions. Later, in the month of March 1804, at the time of the renewal of hostilities with England after the rupture of the treaty of Amiens, the First Consul had by a regular treaty (signed March 19) restored to Portugal, for a sum of sixteen millions, the right of opening her ports during the whole length of the war. He had solemnly recognised her neutrality. Our relations with the Portuguese at that time rested upon this treaty. They had scrupulously observed the burdensome conditions; they had never given us a single reason for complaint, and, relying upon our plighted word, they believed that they were safe from all ulterior persecution.

This was their position when Napoleon's sudden summons fell upon them like a thunderbolt. What he wanted was not to obtain from the Portuguese such or such concessions; it was to take their fleet, their riches, their territory. We see, in fact, that at the outset he wrote to Talleyrand to inform the Portuguese that their ports must be closed to the English, 'in default of which, Napoleon would declare war, and confiscate the English merchandise.' [1]

[1] Napoleon to Talleyrand: Dresden, July 18th, 1807.

But he almost immediately changed his mind, for he was perfectly sure that Portugal would agree to his demands, however iniquitous they might be. He required, therefore, not only that the Portuguese should close their ports to England, but that they should declare war on her; besides the confiscation of English merchandise, he demanded that of all property belonging to the English. These hard conditions were to be accepted without hesitation with the shortest possible delay; and, as he foresaw that they would be disputed before they were submitted to, as he even desired that they should be disputed, in order to have a pretext for invading Portugal, before he had received a word in reply, he organised, under the name of *Corps d'observation de la Gironde*, an army of twenty-five thousand men, formed from the legions which he had left in Brittany and Normandy. These troops were to take possession of this kingdom, under the command of Junot, his former ambassador to Portugal (August 2, 1807). At the same time he sent the regent of the kingdom a formal demand, couched in terms so vague and mild that its aim appeared rather to lull than to induce him to take any decided course of action. Whatever measures the prince might adopt, his fate was already settled. Napoleon was only uncertain about one thing, and that was the way in which he would dispose of Portugal after he had seized it; but his uncertainty was not to last long.

His ideas on this subject were very soon simplified by the immoderate desire which he had conceived of retaking the kingdom of Etruria from Spain. This cession of Tuscany to the house of Bourbon, it is true, had never been anything more than fictitious and nominal on the part of Napoleon. He had never ceased to keep a garrison there, and to command through his generals. During the war against Prussia and Russia he had been compelled to withdraw his troops, in order to send them to other points, and the queen of Etruria, who had become the regent since the death of her husband, abandoned, without means of defence, and reduced to plead her qualification of a neutral power, had been obliged to allow English commerce to enter the

port of Leghorn. Napoleon took care not to lose so fine an opportunity of confiscating at once English merchandise and the kingdom. He ordered Prince Eugène to march a corps of six thousand men upon Leghorn,[1] to seize the English and their property. The regent was only informed of the expedition a month later, September 16th, when it was all ended. Napoleon had only acted, he said, 'out of vigilance for her interests, and against the common enemy;'[2] he had had no other motive than that of preserving Leghorn for his sister and cousin. But he did not tell her to what an extent he carried this solicitude; it went much further still! The occupation of Leghorn had suddenly opened his eyes. He could not possibly do without Tuscany. He required it to complete his possessions in Italy; in short, it was absolutely indispensable. And only a few days after he had tranquillised his good sister, the regent of Etruria, September 25, 1807, he wrote to Duroc: '*We must do away with this deformity in the peninsula of Italy!*' But how was he, the creator of the deformity, to perform this difficult operation without deeply wounding Spain, with whom he still wished to be on good terms? The means were easy; he would indemnify her with Portugal, for which a use was thus found. And he charged Duroc to propose to Izquierdo, the agent of the Spanish court, 'that a part of Portugal should go to the queen of Etruria, another to the Prince of the Peace. . . . I should like Izquierdo,' he added, 'to offer me some plan of this kind.'[3]

There was another deformity in Italy which shocked still more Napoleon's susceptible eyes—I mean the Roman states. These provinces, as he wrote to Eugène, on the 5th of August, impeded his communications with the kingdom of Naples. This was the principal grievance which

[1] Napoleon to Eugène, August 16.

[2] Napoleon to Marie-Louise, regent of Etruria, September 16.

[3] Napoleon to Duroc, September 25. The first idea of the treaty of Fontainebleau has been invariably attributed to Izquierdo. To any one who at all understands the character and policy of Napoleon this supposition appears absurd, and this quotation shows how impossible it is to maintain it.

Napoleon had against the Pope; but in default of this, which it was difficult for him to avow, he had plenty of others to adduce, for he could always find accusations against those whom he had resolved to ruin. How things were changed since the time of the Coronation and the Concordat! Between the Holy See and Napoleon there was henceforward only an exchange of insults and threats on the one side, and honeyed but envenomed words on the other—the just consequence of that hypocritical pact in which, under the mask of religion, both had sought for the gratification of their covetous desires. To the disappointment which he had experienced with regard to the Legations, to the deception, to the usurpation of every kind, of which he had had to complain on the part of Napoleon, to the occupation of Ancona and of Civita Vecchia, to the seizure of the pontifical revenues, to the confiscation of the duchies of Benevento and Ponte Corvo, Pius VII. had replied by making use of his spiritual arms; he had refused to extend the Italian Concordat to Venice; refused to annul Jérôme's first marriage; refused to enter into the Jesuit alliance, and to confirm certain nominations of bishops. He had avenged himself after the manner of the weak, by intrenching himself in passive resistance, without however outstepping his traditional and pontifical right.

Napoleon was all the more exasperated against him because he felt his utter powerlessness to force him in this position. And in the summons which he sent him, he thought fit to add a demand for which he believed he should have the support of public opinion. He ordered Talleyrand to require from the court of Rome that the number of the French cardinals in the councils in which the affairs of the Church were treated should henceforth be proportional to that of the Roman cardinals.

'Talleyrand will add,' said Napoleon, 'that it is time to put an end to the petty quarrels which they are continually trying to pick with me; that I am greatly irritated and indignant at their threats of excommunication and of declaring me dethroned, that there only remains for them to put me in a monastery, *and have me whipped like Louis le*

Débonnaire: that if they wish this to end, they have only to give plenipotentiary powers to the legate, who is in Paris; that if they do not accept this proposition, they must cease all correspondence, and the threats which I despise' (July 22).

As Talleyrand was known to soften the form of the diplomatic despatches which as minister he was obliged to transmit to foreign sovereigns, Napoleon enjoined Prince Eugène to communicate to the Pope a letter, supposed to be confidential, in which the Emperor poured out to his adopted son all his resentment against the court of Rome. This letter, which was still more violent than the preceding one, was intended to frighten those whom it could not convince. Napoleon had obtained everything by terrifying the old men who directed the councils of the Church; he had seen them on so many occasions so feeble and so miserable, that he believed he was sure of bringing them into complete subjection through fear. He did not know how tenacious a priest is. 'My son,' he said, in this long diatribe, which seemed to be breathless with anger, 'I have seen in a letter of his Holiness, which he certainly did not write to me, that he threatens me. Does he think, then, that the rights of the throne are less sacred in the eyes of God than those of the tiara? There were kings before there were popes. They will, they say, publish the harm that I do to religion. *The fools! they do not know that there is not a corner of the world in which I have not done more good to religion than the Pope does it harm!* . . . If the Pope were to commit such an act of folly, he would cease to be the Pope in my eyes; I should consider him as *Antichrist.* . . . If he were to do this, I should cut off my people from all communication with Rome, *and I should establish a police there.* . . . For the last two years the court of Rome has preached rebellion. . . . What does Pius VII. want to do, by denouncing me to Christendom? Interdict *my thrones*, excommunicate me? Does he think that the arms will fall from the hands of my soldiers? *And would he put a dagger into the hands of my people to stab me?* The popes, in their fury, have preached this infamous doctrine.

Do they take me for Louis Débonnaire? . . . The present Pope is too powerful. Priests were not made to govern. Let them imitate St. Peter, St. Paul, the Apostles. . . . Truly, I begin to blush at all I have suffered from the court of Rome, and perhaps the time is not far distant, if they continue to disturb my States, when I shall only recognise the Pope *as bishop of Rome.* . . . I shall unite the Gallican, Italian, German, and Polish churches, *into a council to arrange my affairs without the Pope, and to protect my peoples from the pretensions of the priests of Rome.*'

After this shower of invectives and accusations that were singular enough in the mouth of a man who had himself re-established all the rights of which he complained, came the ultimatum which Napoleon intended to offer to the court of Rome. He repeated his demand with regard to the number of the cardinals, which was to be in proportion to the population; he required that the Italian Concordat should be extended to Venice; lastly, he called upon the Pope to confirm the nomination of the bishops, letting it be clearly seen that a schism would be the inevitable consequence of a longer resistance to these commands.[1] This ultimatum, however, only concerned the spiritual sovereign; there was another for the temporal prince, of which Napoleon had already more than once informed the court of Rome, and which he renewed in not less peremptory terms, viz. a request that he should closely ally himself with France, and drive her enemies out of the pontifical territory. This outburst of anger was in reality only a stratagem. With Rome, as with Portugal, he had exaggerated the complaints and swelled the list of requirements, in order that a refusal to any one of them might permit him to act as he chose. He was seeking not satisfaction, but a pretext for seizing the Papal States. Napoleon's threats produced the terror that he expected in the Holy See. The Pope hastened to name Cardinal Litta his negotiator at Paris. But the Emperor, who had decided beforehand to regard this as a bad choice, replied to this step by informing the court of Rome that he would only treat with Cardinal de

[1] Napoleon to Prince Eugène, July 22, 1807.

Bayanne, and by announcing that a longer hesitation would force him to unite the three provinces of Ancona, Urbino, and Camerino[1] to the kingdom of Italy. It was just these provinces which only a short time before he had mentioned to Eugène as indispensable to his communications with Naples. His opinion on this point had, it appears, been strengthened. The nomination of Cardinal de Bayanne, which the Pope hastened to agree to in the most affectionate manner,[2] in order to appease him, did not for an instant stop the fulfilment of a prophecy that was made with so much certainty. Almost at the same time that the cardinal left Rome to go to Fontainebleau, General Lemarrois took possession of the provinces of the Holy See in the name of the Emperor. This invasion, like that of Leghorn and of Portugal, was only the prelude of measures infinitely graver and more decisive; but as Napoleon wrote about this time, '*A thing must be done in order to own that one thought of it.*'

While these preliminary measures were being executed against the victims of the reconciliation between France and Russia at Tilsit, Napoleon saw a prey on which he set the greatest value escape him just as he was extending his hand to seize it. The English had captured the Danish fleet at Copenhagen, after having bombarded the town, and this event had produced an immense sensation in Europe. How England had obtained a knowledge of the secret stipulations of Tilsit is not yet known. When the Government was questioned on the subject in Parliament, they resolutely refused to say from whence they had derived it, though they maintained the accuracy of their information. There are strong reasons for thinking that this valuable communication was made to them by Sir Robert Wilson, who had just served for two years in the Russian army. It is not even impossible that they had received it from Alexander himself, who, if we may believe an assertion contained in the *Mémoires* of General Bontourlin, had remained at heart attached to the English alliance. What is certain is that they had learned, it matters little by what

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, August 28.
[2] Pope Pius VII. to Napoleon, September 11, 1807.

means, that Napoleon had resolved with the consent of Alexander to seize the maritime resources of Denmark, in order to employ them against their country. 'His Majesty,' said a declaration of the British Cabinet, dated 25th September 1807, 'has received *the most certain information* with regard to the determination of the present head of the French nation to invade Holstein and force Denmark to close the passages of the Sound to British navigation.'[1] The English ministers could hardly have been better informed had they read Napoleon's letters to Bernadotte.

Power was no longer in the hands of Fox's feeble successors. The want of capacity that the Grenville Cabinet had shown in the conduct of the war, and their dissensions with the king with regard to the concessions to be made to the Irish who were serving in the army, had brought Pitt's friends back to office, and the new ministry was led by Canning and Castlereagh. These two statesmen were certainly not remarkable for their scrupulousness; but when once in possession of power, which they owed to their complaisance towards the king, they undoubtedly displayed more energy, decision, and intelligence than their predecessors. They understood the danger which threatened their country, and the necessity of a prompt determination if they would frustrate the plans of their powerful adversaries. The peril was in fact imminent. Denmark was incapable of resisting the summonses of Napoleon, which became every day more urgent. Bernadotte was on the frontier of Holstein with his army. 'Denmark must declare war on England, or I declare war on Denmark;' wrote Napoleon to him, the 2d August 1807; 'in the latter case you will have to take possession of the whole of the Danish continent.' On the 17th of August this notice was changed to a formal order to march.[2] The unfortunate regent, threatened with the loss of half his states, had long before resolved, or at any rate promised to yield, for, as early as the 31st of July, Napoleon complained, in a letter to Talleyrand, of the non-fulfilment of the *promises* of Denmark.

[1] 'Annual Register.' State Papers.
[2] Napoleon to Berthier, August 17, 1807.

But that prince knew to what hard tyranny he was about to submit, he justly feared the retaliation of England, and tried to gain time by delays.

Unfortunately for the intrepid little Danish nation, sacrificed to quarrels to which they would gladly have remained strangers, their situation admitted of no middle term, and the moment that one of the belligerent powers violated their neutrality it was impossible for the other to recognise it. The Danish navy by itself could not annoy England, but directly it was to be added to the immense means which were already at Napoleon's disposal, and especially when all the efforts of the Continent were united with his, it became a dangerous weapon. It consisted at that time of twenty ships of the line, sixteen frigates, nine brigs, and a large number of gunboats manned with good crews; these vessels would have been such a strong reinforcement to Napoleon's navy, that at a given moment they might have turned the scales in his favour. These are circumstances which must not be lost sight of, if we would judge impartially of the violence of the English intervention at Copenhagen. The English Government forestalled Napoleon, they bombarded Copenhagen, after having offered to the Danish nation to defend them, to guarantee to them their states and their colonies, and to place at their disposal 'every means of naval, military, and pecuniary defence.'[1] 'Foreseeing,' to use the expression of one of their admirals, 'the crimes that France proposed to commit by means of the Danish navy,[2] they vainly insisted on the fleet being confided to them as a deposit, which they promised to restore, as they did that of Portugal.' In the eyes of Europe they had all the odium of this expedition, which caused a great sensation; but Europe was not then aware of what has since been known, viz. that the Danish fleet, at the time of its capture, was on the point of passing into the hands of Napoleon, to whom the regent of Denmark had already made promises of submission.

The almost immediate effect of this event was that Alex-

[1] British Declaration, September 25.
[2] Admiral Gambier's Proclamation, August 16. 'Annual Register.'

ander's derisive offer of mediation with England was made void. The English Cabinet had already replied to it by asking, through Lord Leveson Gower, for information concerning the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit. This demand, which touched the principal point of the question, showed Alexander that he had been discovered, and it compelled him to throw off the mask by a declaration of war, which at last placed things in their true light. The truth was, that since Tilsit Alexander had been the disguised servitor of French policy, and for England open hostility was preferable to a feigned friendship. By this rupture Alexander was called upon to fulfil the engagements that he had made in his interview with Napoleon; it was now Napoleon's turn to carry out those which he had entered into with Alexander.

But Napoleon had no sooner taken leave of the Czar than he repented of the promises he had made. As was usual with him in all his diplomatic transactions, he endeavoured to take back what he had given. Turkey had, contrary to all expectation, accepted his offer of mediation, which had at once removed the possibility that had been anticipated at Tilsit of a war, to be followed by a division of the Ottoman empire. By this acceptance, which was a skilful stroke on the part of the Porte, Napoleon was called upon to require, according to the formal promise which accompanied the offer of mediation, the preliminary evacuation of the principalities by the Russian troops; but, as he had verbally engaged with Alexander not to insist upon this evacuation, he found himself asked to perform two contradictory promises, and his deception was laid bare. To the difficulties of this situation, which was embarrassing for a man who boasted so loudly of his honesty, were added the remonstrances of Sebastiani, who pointed out with great force how impolitic it would be to allow Turkey to fall under Russian domination. For all these reasons Napoleon regretted to have gone so far with Alexander, and as he could not venture to retract promises which were too recent to be denied, he endeavoured to elude their fulfilment.

He had sent Savary to St. Petersburg with instructions

to amuse the Czar with fine promises, and to turn against Sweden Alexander's impatience and avidity to get possession of the Turkish provinces. But Finland appeared to him a present of no value, and the more they tried to draw his attention to this side, the more energetically he claimed what had been promised him on the other. He dwelt, and not without reason, on his own fidelity in fulfilling his engagements, and the increasing irritation of the old Russian party, to whom he needed to offer great advantages, in order to obtain pardon for an alliance that was really very unpopular in Russia, as was proved by the contemptuous coldness with which our ambassador was received in Russian society. Napoleon, without going so far as to wound Alexander, still tried to obtain from him at any rate a temporary evacuation of Wallachia and Moldavia.

In order to influence the resolutions of the Czar, Napoleon made use of the military occupation which he had maintained in Prussia. The treaty of Tilsit had stipulated that the Prussian states should be evacuated after the payment of the contributions of war, but the amount of these contributions had not been named. Napoleon fixed it himself, and so high that for a country exhausted and ruined as Prussia then was, it was nothing less than rapacity. The sum total of these contributions, of which the last instalment only remained to be paid, amounted to 601,200,000 francs. Independent of these enormous sums for the time, Prussia had furnished a large ransom in objects of art and requisitions of every kind.[1] He took advantage of her impossibility to set herself free, to make her maintain his troops for more than a year. The presence of these troops on Prussian territory was moreover a permanent threat to Russia. Very soon he did not hesitate to give the Czar clearly to understand that he should only leave him the principalities on condition that he himself kept Silesia. Such was the strange recantation which Caulaincourt received orders to make the Czar agree to. Caulaincourt

[1] Visconti's report shows that the objects of art collected in the north of Germany were classified in the following manner :—Pictures, 350; manuscripts, 282; statues, 50; bronzes, 192, etc.

had, like Savary, figured in the affair of the Duc d'Enghien, though he had, it is true, taken a much less prominent part, having only supported Ordiner's movement upon Ettenheim ; but it was still a stroke of diabolical irony on the part of Napoleon to force these two men upon the young Czar, as if to remind him of the utter powerlessness of his will. Caulaincourt, without disputing the verbal promises of Tilsit, was to represent them merely as provisions that were by no means obligatory ; and with regard to the evacuation of Silesia, he had orders to pretend that he could see nothing more in it than a natural equivalent for that of the principalities. Napoleon consented to abandon them to Alexander, provided that Alexander consented to leave him this last shred of the Prussian spoils.

With these first clouds floating over the Russian alliance, Napoleon's desire to induce Austria to make a breach with England, or at least to join the continental blockade, the necessity, in short, of preventing any diversion on her part till he had completed the numerous enterprises that he had begun in the West, compelled him to give some satisfaction to the court of Vienna, in order to obtain her acquiescence. After having for a moment hesitated between conciliation and violence, for he was on the point of treating Austria with as little consideration as Denmark, he attained his end by restoring Braunau to her, a strong place which he had kept after the occupation of the mouth of the Cattaro by the Russians. He had, moreover, no longer any pretext for refusing it, since the Russians had just given up to us both Corfu and the mouths of the Cattaro. An exchange of territory on the banks of the Isonzo, amicably made between the kingdoms of Italy and Austria, achieved the tranquillisation of the Cabinet of Vienna, who greatly feared lest their project of mediation, proposed after the battle of Eylau, should bring misfortunes on them. In this the court was not mistaken, and Napoleon had by no means pardoned them ; but it sufficed for the present that he obtained the adhesion of Austria to the continental blockade, and her neutrality in the complicated affairs in which he was engaged.

Such was the spectacle which Europe presented during the three months that followed the interview at Tilsit. No strength could resist the two colossal empires which had joined hands over the ruin of the old great continental powers. All the intermediary states were paralysed by powerlessness or terror, and our soldiers were marching everywhere to destroy the last vestige of independence among the nations whose weakness or position had hitherto protected them from the storm. The name of *corps d'observation*, which Napoleon invariably gave to the different armies which he sent against Etruria, the states of Rome, or Portugal, seemed to say that he did not think these states worthy of a declaration of war. Their occupation was simply a police measure. The Danish nation alone had prevented imminent invasion by throwing themselves into our arms after the catastrophe of Copenhagen. He could no longer seize their navy, but he used their misfortunes to justify enterprises which he had commenced long before the issue of the English expedition; and even the conquest of Portugal was represented as a simple return for the bombarding of the Danish capital. In a correspondence which the *Moniteur* published, as sent from Lisbon, the Portuguese themselves asked to be seized, in order to avenge Denmark. 'We wish to join our efforts with those of the Continent,' said this fellow-countryman of Camöens. 'The outrages done to all sovereigns in the atrocious expedition of Copenhagen will justify our war. . . . Hatred to England is the feeling of the present generation!'[1] The Portuguese little suspected that they were so impatient to sacrifice themselves to the cause of the continental blockade. Besides these various operations, Napoleon was preparing in the most profound secrecy two expeditions, one against Sardinia, the other against Sicily,—that indispensable gem in Joseph's crown. Both were doomed to the discreditable failure which fell to the lot of all his naval enterprises; but the success of these plans appeared certain, and when once they were realised, what obstacle could henceforth stop him?

[1] *Moniteur* of October 25, 1807.

It was a singular fact, however, and one worthy of remark, that by the side of these inoffensive states, against whom Napoleon had not a single legitimate grievance, and whom he only attacked from ambition, there was another which had given him just reason to complain, after having been, it is true, driven to extremities by a long series of insult and bad treatment, and Napoleon, instead of punishing her, seemed to have quite forgotten it; he even treated her with a great deal of kindness and consideration. This state was Spain, and the subject of complaint was the proclamation of the Prince of the Peace at the time of Jena of an attempt at revolt, disavowed almost as soon as conceived, but still certain although it was disguised in obscure circumlocutions. Napoleon, who was then occupied with other plans, had accepted without demur the explanations that were given him, and had contented himself with requiring as a pledge of the future docility of Spain that La Romana's corps of occupation should be sent to the shores of the Baltic. Since then he had settled the affairs of the North, he had returned to Paris, and, contrary to all expectation, he had not recriminated. The Court of Spain, fearing one of those bursts of anger to which she was accustomed, had sent the Duke de Frias to congratulate and appease him. Napoleon gave him the warmest reception. Instead of complaining, he wrote to the king of Spain, on the 8th of September, thanking him for having always acted as a *faithful ally* of France. He informed him of his projects against Portugal, urged him to join us in forcing England into peace, but of the famous proclamation he did not say a word. This magnanimity was the more extraordinary because Napoleon had always treated Spain with pitiless brutality, even when he could upbraid her with no wrong. Now that he had really a right to complain, he held his tongue. He seemed either to wish to keep his grievance in reserve, or else not to remember it. What design did this silence cover? What interest had he in being generous? It is certain that this clemency was not natural to him, and that such a novel attitude clearly indicated that he was meditating some scheme affecting Spain.

What would this deeply meditated surprise be, and by what means would it be made? Napoleon himself did not as yet know, for he was not a man to bind himself beforehand by a fixed plan in an enterprise in which his ambition admitted no limit; but what he had irrevocably decided was, that he would do something. This plan was not so recent or so fresh as is generally thought. Napoleon had for a long time treated Spain as one of those miserable kingdoms in which the sovereign was nothing more than the agent of his own authority. It was no exaggeration, when in his opening address to the Legislative Body, on the 6th of August 1807, he compared Spain to Holland, Switzerland, and the kingdoms of Italy and Naples. His encroachments on this unfortunate country had in fact begun long before the time that is ordinarily assigned to them. As early as the day after Jena, alluding to the reports that were current after the proclamation of the Prince of the Peace, he wrote to Cambacérès: 'Where did you learn that Spain was joining the coalition? *All her strong places are in my hands.*' This was no doubt one of those gross exaggerations which he well knew how to make, but there was nevertheless some truth in it. Napoleon had vessels and soldiers in several ports of Spain, he was in communication with a great number of agents of the Spanish Government, and he thoroughly understood how to turn them to account.

Among the numerous questions that have been raised with regard to the origin of this obscure affair of Spain, there is one which French historians invariably decide in favour of Napoleon,—I mean of his pretended right to interfere in the Peninsula. This right was founded, according to them, first, on the treachery of the Prince of the Peace, and secondly, on what they term the necessity of making some decision with respect to Spanish decadence. It suffices, in order to show the worth of these assertions, to give a glance at Napoleon's former relations with the court of Spain. Drawn into war against England by a treaty wrested from a weak king, but in which a perfect reciprocity between the two states was at any rate stipulated,

Spain had only found violence, spoliation, and nameless execrations in an alliance in which she had looked for protection and security. Duped in the affair of the kingdom of Etruria, in which she had received a fictitious state in exchange for a magnificent colony, plundered and robbed at the time of the treaty of Amiens, which cost her the Island of Trinidad in spite of the most stringent clauses of the alliance, publicly insulted in the person of her king at the conclusion of the treaty of the six millions a month, she had again found herself engaged in a disastrous war, against her own will; she had lost her commerce and her colonies by it; she had heroically sacrificed her navy for us at Trafalgar. In return for so much submission and devotion, she had seen her king treated with the most sovereign contempt whenever he had attempted to offer any resistance to unjust demands. She had seen Napoleon dispose of all the resources of her kingdom; she had seen him drive the Spanish dynasty out of Naples, to give place to his brother Joseph, and that after having drawn them into his snares, and led them to revolt by dint of insult and exactions. But this was not all. After such cruel sufferings, after the sanguinary sacrifice of Trafalgar, and at the end of Napoleon's negotiations with Fox's cabinet, Spain suddenly learned that this perjured ally, trafficking in Spanish territory as if it had been his own property, had offered successively to England and Russia the cession of the Balearic Isles, as an indemnity for one of the princes whom he had despoiled. The measure of iniquity had long since been full, and it was after this last discovery that the Prince of the Peace had thought that the right moment was come to shake off the yoke, by taking advantage of the opportunity which the war with Russia offered them. We must say it plainly: Manuel de Godoy's only error in this project of revolt was that of not having attempted it earlier, and especially in not having persevered in it at any cost; and if he was a traitor to any one, it was to his ruined country, sold and humiliated by the foreigner.

So much for the right arising out of the pretended treachery of the Prince of the Peace. As for that founded on

the decline of Spain, by making Napoleon a sort of Providence sent to regenerate empires, it betokens such an amount of superstition in the writers who adduce it that it requires a certain effort of patience seriously to discuss the facts upon which they base this abject theory of regeneration by servitude. That Spain was a monarchy that had declined since the time of Isabella and Charles V. would never be disputed by any one. The immense effort that Spain had made in the sixteenth century to rule Europe; the immoderate extent of her colonisation, which had drained the mother country; and, more than all this, the iron yoke of the absolute power of Catholicism, personified in the Inquisition; the annihilation of the industrious Moors; the enormous number of monastic institutions—such were the evils of centuries which had prematurely checked the rise, at first so brilliant, of the Spanish nation. In spite of this, the philosophical spirit, which penetrated everywhere in the eighteenth century, ended by finding its way into Catholic Spain. It had for its instrument a bigoted but well-meaning king. The strict Charles III., influenced by an enlightened minister, M. d'Aranda, was seen to inaugurate in Spain an era of reforms and improvements. Clerical domination received a death-blow through the Jesuits; civil liberties were increased, and industry had revived. The elements of this happy revival had not ceased to exist in Spain, but the spectacle of the frightful convulsions which so quickly succeeded to the glorious dawn of the French Revolution produced in that country, as in many others, a time of intermission and a sort of stupor, which was soon followed by war. To this war of alternate reverses and success had succeeded an alliance, offensive and defensive, much more disastrous for Spain than continued hostilities; but it was especially from Bonaparte's accession to the Consulate that her misfortunes dated. It was he who was the principal cause of this returning declension, which historians venture to use as an argument in support of his usurpations. It was he who had twice driven Spain into a war which she repelled; he who had brought ruin upon the commerce of Spain and her rising colonies; he who had exhausted the

Spanish treasury by his exactions; he who had, in opposition to the advice of his own seamen, given the signal for the destruction of the Spanish navy, by sending it to the slaughter of Trafalgar; it was he, in short, who was the creator of the dissensions which began to agitate the Peninsula. If the name of Manuel de Godoy was held in public execration, it was solely because he was believed to be the instrument and docile servitor of French policy, which he submitted to in fact, but execrating it; and if the popular imagination in quest of a hero was enamoured of the young Prince of Asturias, heir apparent to the Crown, it was because he was regarded as the natural enemy of this influence.

Were these, then, reasons why Napoleon was called upon to play the part of the regenerator of Spain? And suppose success had crowned his enterprise, what benefit could he confer on her? What was there so enviable in the *régime* that he had just given to France? How could he justify this strange metamorphosis of Cæsarism into the redemption of nations? Spain was certainly behind the epoch in enlightenment and material improvements, but though subject to the capricious *régime* of a king's good pleasure, she had not submitted to a despotism as degrading as that which weighed upon France. Her situation in this critical moment has generally been judged of by the scandalous reports of the court and the lying statistics which Napoleon had drawn up to justify his usurpation. But, even admitting these to be true, this was not the life of the whole country. Spain possessed very extensive provincial and municipal liberties, under protection of which a great number of prosperous and independent men could exist. Some of her provinces, like Navarre and the Basque provinces, were regular republics, voting their own taxes, and governing themselves. The authority of the king was somewhat absolute, but it was mild and tolerant; he did not bow before the law, but he respected traditions, and his faults were those of weakness and carelessness. The court was frivolous and corrupt, like a court of the old *régime;* but compared with the scandalous proceedings of the imperial court, even the *liaison* of the queen with

Godoy, which has roused the indignation of the virtuous apologists of the empire, might pass for a model of patriarchal customs. Moreover, whatever may have been the corruption of the courtiers, the nation was honest and sound. A Spaniard commanded esteem in Europe for his courage, his sobriety, his fidelity to his word, and his susceptibility in everything touching his honour; he held an old-fashioned belief, but at any rate he had a belief. With a fund of such rare qualities, the nation was better able to teach the French, such as Napoleon had fashioned them, than the French were able to teach the Spaniards. The only gift which these strange missionaries of civilisation could bring them was the scourge of a foreign rule.

Let us abandon then the discreditable sophisms which have too long served as an excuse for crimes of which we can only prevent a repetition by representing them in all their frightful reality. The same may be said of the stories invented by Napoleon, and since repeated by complacent apologists, to throw the responsibility of the beginning and after development of the affairs of Spain upon the secondary actors in this melancholy drama. In this, as in the catastrophe of Vincennes, and in all the actions of his life on which he feared to see thrown the avenging light of history, this great deceiver, the happy creator of his own legend, has endeavoured to heap up equivocal and contradictory statements. He even went so far, as we shall show, as to fabricate false documents, in order to escape from the severe judgments of the future, and the success of his historical fortifications, which is perhaps still more astonishing than that of his political and military stratagems, proves that he had not reckoned too much on the credulity of the human race. Napoleon wrote little, and for good reasons, about the affairs of Spain, but, on the other hand, he talked about them a good deal. In the voluminous collection of his notes, we only find a few pages relative to the sojourn of the dethroned sovereigns in France. In these, which are among his *observations upon the manuscript of St. Helena*, he endeavours to prove that he had an interest in causing Ferdinand VII. and his brother Don

Carlos to be assassinated; by their death, he says, everything would have been terminated. He asserts that Talleyrand advised him to get rid of these two young princes, and he claims the merit of having rejected the counsel. He does not say a word about the origin of the war, but in his conversations, which he knew would be carefully gathered up by his attentive listeners, and which, in fact, became the source from whence historians have most commonly drawn their information, he is much more explicit.

In these talks he distinctly ascribes to Talleyrand the first idea of invading Spain, just as he ascribed to him that of the assassination of the Duc d'Enghien. He said so to O'Meara, and he repeated it to Las Cases. 'It was Talleyrand,' said the Emperor, 'who pushed on the war with Spain, *though he was crafty enough to appear opposed to it in public.*'[1] This last expression is singularly characteristic. What! Talleyrand was crafty enough to drive Napoleon into committing this fatal act, and at the same time he had induced a belief in the public mind that he was opposed to it, and this under the eye of the imperial police? This was more than art,—it was witchcraft! Las Cases adds: 'And it was *out of spite* that Napoleon chose Valençay for Ferdinand's residence.' This fact is certainly not invented. The choice of Valençay, which belonged to Talleyrand, as a prison for the dethroned prince, has often been brought forward as a proof of the active assistance of this diplomatist in Napoleon's plans. We see by this what may be thought of it. It was one of those Mephistophelian tricks for which Napoleon had a predilection, an idea of the same kind that had suggested his sending Savary and Caulaincourt to Alexander; and if the choice of Valençay proves anything, it is rather in favour of Talleyrand than against him. It proves that Napoleon bore him ill-will for his opposition, and compromised him as a punishment. The present admirers of Napoleon, who are more cautious than their predecessors, would now wish that history should take no account of the different journals kept at St. Helena, nor of his daily con-

[1] *Mémorial* de Las Cases.

versations. No one has proved better than ourselves how full of lying statements these narrations are, but the stories are his own invention, and not those of his friends to whom he dictated them; they emanated from himself, they contain a notable portion of truth, for it is only by misrepresenting truth that skilful lies are framed; they reveal one of the most striking traits of his character, and they are the more worthy of discussion, because they are the first source of the falsehoods which have been commented upon and embellished. What, moreover, would become of the justice of history, if we are to pay no attention to the false witness which a man has left against himself and others? The striking harmony between the journals of Las Cases and O'Meara is an incontestable proof of the fidelity of the authors for every unprejudiced mind, but the formal confirmation which they have received by a recent publication [1] no longer leaves any room for doubt. It is Napoleon himself who speaks in their narratives. They agree in substance, if not in form. The journal of Colonel Campbell, the English Commissioner to the island of Elba, contains exactly the same facts, sometimes even expressed in exactly the same terms. Here also Napoleon ascribes to Talleyrand's influence the war with Spain and the death of the Duc d'Enghien. 'Talleyrand,' he says, 'was out of favour, in consequence of the complaints of the kings of Bavaria and Würtemberg, from whom he had extorted large sums of money; but he continued to frequent the Emperor's *soirées*, and it was in order to regain his favour that he proposed to him to take advantage of the dissensions that had broken out in Spain.' And he adds that Talleyrand often urged him 'to get rid of the Bourbons by assassinating them.'

This statement, which, to say the least, appears at first sight very questionable, agrees in reality with an assertion contained in the unpublished *Mémoires* of Cambacérès, that grotesque personage, who could never pardon Talleyrand his superiority and his raillery, the only authority that has yet been found for charging this statesman with the respon-

[1] Napoleon at Fontainebleau and Elba: Sir Neil Campbell's Journal.

sibility of the affair of Spain. In none of the contemporary documents do we find any trace of his active influence upon these events. He was a confidential but unofficial agent; and he only played a secondary and passive part. Talleyrand was in fact out of favour at this period, and that not in consequence of the complaints of foreign courts, but because, disgusted with an office in which Napoleon made use of his skill without ever following his advice, he had insisted on exchanging his title of minister of foreign affairs for that of *vice grand elector*. He had been succeeded in the ministry by Champagny, a much more docile instrument. It was through Champagny, his minister of foreign affairs, and Duroc, his confidential man, that Napoleon commenced the preliminary transactions which ended in the invasion of Spain. Talleyrand, attached to the court by his office of lord high chamberlain, accompanied Napoleon to Fontainebleau, and we see by Izquierdo's despatches that to a certain degree he was informed of the Emperor's plans, and that the Spanish agent endeavoured to make use of his supposed credit, but he only took part incidentally and by conversations in these preparatory measures. There is more. He was not even aware of their real aim. He believed that it was to obtain the province of the Ebro. He never touched on any other subject with Izquierdo.[1] All the decisive overtures were made by Duroc, who, like Champagny, was an involuntary actor in the affair. During the whole of this period, up to the issue of the famous scenes of Bayonne, there was a complete interruption in the correspondence between Napoleon and Talleyrand. The first letter that the Emperor wrote him after he left the ministry was on the 25th of April 1808, at which epoch everything was ended.

These are only suppositions; but when we reflect on the character and the turn of mind of these two men, on their historical antecedents and their respective temperaments, we ask ourselves how so improbable an accusation

[1] The curious despatches of Izquierdo have been published with a number of other precious documents in the *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la révolution d'Espagne* de Llorente (Nellerto).

could have been believed without further proof than the assertion of a man who has in so many cases been detected in imposture? We ask how credence can have been gained for this story of Talleyrand's attaching himself to Napoleon, as his evil genius, in order to draw him step by step towards the abyss? Our object is not to rehabilitate the memory of this venal and versatile man, but to render to each his due, for that is the first duty of an impartial historian. For any one who is familiar with Napoleon's mind, with his manner of acting and of thinking, his disposition, his temperament, and the acts of his whole life, this assertion that in an affair of such importance, in an enterprise so vast, so perilous, so coolly premeditated, he was drawn along unwittingly, as it were, by bad counsel, is one of the most extraordinary ideas that can be conceived. It is he, the consummate dissembler; he who never took counsel of any one; who only unmasked his plans when they were complete; he, that connoisseur and master in treachery; he, the author of so many acts of perfidy, who represents himself as led astray and perverted by the immorality of his counsellors; who poses as the virtuous young man corrupted by evil communications! He brings forward an excuse, the benefit of which is generally only given to women and children, and it is accepted without examination, without any other guarantee than his word! Pardon has been easily granted to this innocent man, as if the illusion were possible; as if this odious machination did not bear even in the smallest details the stamp of his hand, the seal of his crafty mind; as if from each incident of this skilfully conducted intrigue, and from the very shadow of this dark ambush, there did not arise a cry, the supreme cry of evidence: *Tu es ille vir*,—'It is thou that has done it!'

Napoleon was the less likely to be influenced by Talleyrand in this affair, as he had never taken any account of his counsels on a number of other occasions, in which he had the greatest interest in following them. We have seen him, especially at the time of Austerlitz, when the favour that he showed Talleyrand amounted almost to intimacy, frustrate with imperturbable and somewhat ironical obstinacy

the really meritorious efforts which the minister made to induce him to adopt a wiser and more moderate policy. Talleyrand's advice, which was supported by reason, the force of things, and the opinion of all sensible men, did not modify on a single point the plans of a wild policy; and are we to believe that in an enterprise so dangerous, so opposed to the views of this far-sighted, moderate-minded man, the enemy of extreme parties, it suddenly became the determining cause? Talleyrand was not very accessible to scruples; he was above all things a courtier, and a complaisant. But what has never been contested is, that he possessed tact and moderation. He had for a long time been frightened by the foolish drift, the gigantic aims of Napoleon's policy; his good common sense was as much revolted as it was alarmed by them. What interest could he have in urging Napoleon, against his convictions, to rush upon such hazardous enterprises? Was it not his interest, on the contrary, to dissuade him from them, if it were only to retain the advantage of his privileged position? He was not, however, a man to compromise himself by a useless disapprobation; and it is very probable that, being informed somewhat late of plans that were already being carried out, and on which he had not been consulted, he consented to approve what he could not hinder. But such an assent is very different from the influence that is attributed to him. As the part that he is supposed to have played was opposed to his interest, his character, and his well-known moderate opinions, it is for those who accuse him to furnish more conclusive proofs than assertions that are devoid of all probability.

Whatever may have been said, after Napoleon himself, in order to render this question of responsibility, so important in history, obscure, the closer we study it, the more we recognise that in the affair of Spain, as in that of the Duc d'Enghien, he only consulted his unbridled passions; the conception is his, the plan is his; even the execution is his, for his agents did nothing without his orders. From the moment that he laid hands upon Etruria, the property of Spain, this fatal idea, which had already for a long time

existed in his mind, began to develop and gradually to unfold. In order to meet the complaints of the court of Spain, he offered them the spoils of the house of Braganza, to whom he had sent his ultimatum; and this division of Portugal was itself only a step towards invading and insensibly enchaining Spain. As for his ultimatum, he knew it to be so unacceptable, that he did not even wait for the regent's reply to dispose of Portugal. He did not receive this reply till the 12th of October, and as early as the 25th of September he charged Duroc to come to an understanding with Izquierdo for the division of Portugal. The representatives of this unfortunate country, so shamefully sacrificed for having had confidence in a treaty signed by Napoleon, made all the concessions, in order to satisfy him, that an offended conqueror or a betrayed ally could have exacted. Not only did they consent to join the continental blockade, to confiscate British merchandise, to close their ports to the English, but they engaged to declare war on this nation to whom they were bound by an ancient alliance, convinced that this measure, wrung from them in their distress, would not be imputed to them as a crime. Upon one point alone the regent offered supplicating remonstrances against the conditions dictated by Napoleon. He considered that it was against his honour to confiscate private property belonging to the English, and could not bring himself to ratify this article. This was all that Napoleon wanted. He immediately recalled his ambassador from Lisbon, and commanded Junot to enter Spain, in order to march upon Portugal.[1]

Writing to the king of Spain the same day, October 12, Napoleon said, 'I will meet your Majesty's wishes with regard to Portugal, and in any case the sovereignty will belong to Spain, as your Majesty has appeared to desire.' King Charles IV. had by no means desired this inconvenient present; he accepted it reluctantly, as an indemnity for Etruria, but he was still far from suspecting to what good account Napoleon was about to turn this benefit.

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, October 12, 1807; to Clarke, Minister of War, the same day.

He did not see that in making himself partaker of these iniquities he was placing himself at the mercy of his powerful accomplice. That the project of seizing the whole or part of the Spanish provinces was thus early formed in Napoleon's mind, it is impossible to doubt. Junot had already entered Spain; and on the 17th of October his master sent him instructions, in which we find these significant words: 'Give me a description of all the provinces through which you pass, of the routes, of the nature of the ground; send me some *sketches*. Charge the engineers with this work, *which it is important to have*. Let me know the distances between the villages, the nature of the country, the resources that it offers.' This was of Spain, let it be remarked, and not of Portugal. It was a singular way of entering a country as a friend! To what did all these recommendations tend? What was the aim of having plans made by engineers, in a country that he was crossing as an ally? All this is curiously strange and equivocal.

But what had Spain to be uneasy about? Napoleon had re-opened his negotiations with Izquierdo, and at this very moment he was drawing up in concert with him the stipulations of that famous treaty of Fontainebleau which was about to offer Spain the gain that she coveted, and at the same time prepare the way for the carrying out of Napoleon's scheme. He granted to the negotiator the most unlooked-for advantages. He wished every one to be tranquillised and contented. The Prince of the Peace, who was exposed to the hatred of the heir presumptive, feared for the future; an independent principality was created for him in the south of Portugal, from which he could afterwards brave his enemies. The queen of Portugal was despoiled and discontented; another principality, in the North, was given to her and her children, under the title of Northern Lusitania. The king of Spain also desired to have a solace; he was promised half the Portuguese colonies, and he received the pompous title of *Emperor of the two Americas*. In the division of this rich prey Napoleon forgot only himself. It sufficed him to have

created the happiness of his allies; and if he kept in deposit the provinces of Beira, Tras-os-Montes, Estremadura, the centre and the heart of Portugal, it was only '*to dispose of them at the general peace;*'[1] and in this case their possessor, whoever he might be, was to recognise the sovereignty of the king of Spain. Nevertheless, among these tranquillising clauses there were a few words carelessly added at the bottom of a schedule, which a more penetrating observer than Izquierdo would have seen augured nothing good for the Spanish monarchy. It was the article which stipulated 'that a fresh corps of forty thousand French troops should be assembled at Bayonne, to be ready to enter Spain, and march into Portugal in case the English sent reinforcements and threatened an attack.'[2] This was in reality providing against a very distant misfortune. Junot had entered with twenty-five thousand men; Spain had sent as many. How was it possible to suppose that these fifty thousand men, to whom Spain could so easily send reinforcements, would be placed in danger by a very improbable landing of the English, and would be insufficient to drive them back?

However, the hypothesis was not after all inadmissible, although forty thousand men was an enormous number. It made the reinforcements larger than the expeditionary corps. The Spanish negotiator had moreover taken the precaution of adding to the article 'that the new corps should not enter Spain without the consent of the two contracting parties.' It did not occur to him that when once this *corps d'armée* was on an unprotected frontier, they might cross it without asking permission. Napoleon was incapable of such a breach of promise; his respect for frontiers was well known! If the negligent minister of the king of Spain could have read certain passages in the fresh instructions which Napoleon sent to Junot on the 31st of October, three days after the signature of the treaty of Fontainebleau, he would have felt less sure of his good intentions, and would even have begun to have had some

[1] Treaty of Fontainebleau, Articles III. and VIII.
[2] Schedule annexed to Article VI.

suspicion. In this letter he recommends his lieutenant to present himself as a friend: 'to enter the territory of Portugal *as Spanish territory*,' a comparison that was not very tranquillising for Spain, since he adds, a little further on: 'I have already informed you that when I authorised you to enter this country *as an ally*, it was that you might make yourself master of the fleet, but that I had already determined to seize Portugal.' To seize it for Spain, it will doubtless be said. Not at all, for he concludes by telling him: 'As soon as you have the different strong places in your hands, you will put French commandants in them, and you will make sure of these positions. I need not tell you *that you must not put a single strong place in the power of the Spanish*, especially in that part of the country which is to remain in my hands' (according to the terms of the treaty).

These explicit instructions, sent to Junot immediately after the conclusion of the treaty, taken together with the orders to have plans made of Spanish localities by engineers, and the concentration of a corps of forty thousand men upon the frontier of Spain,—these three facts, we say, are sufficient evidence that the treaty of Fontainebleau, so far from having been for a single moment regarded as serious by its author, as some pretend, was never anything more for him than a means of more easily deceiving Spain, a pretext for introducing himself into her territory, and an opening for still vaster projects. Another proof not less significant of Napoleon's plans was the absolute secrecy which he imposed on King Charles towards all those who would have been able to enlighten him. The treaty of Fontainebleau remained a mystery for all the Ministers.[1] Between this weak-minded man and the Emperor there was no longer any intermediate person. A treaty to interpret, spoils to divide, a military occupation to maintain together—how many dissensions, how many conflicts, how

[1] This fact, asserted first by M. de Cevallos, in his celebrated *Exposé* (1808), and afterwards denied by Escoiquiz, has been confirmed in a most incontestable manner by the *Mémoires* of Azanza, and of O'Farrill, both, like Cevallos, former ministers of King Charles.

many unforeseen difficulties would not arise out of these, especially in a country weakened and torn by factions, and for a man so skilful in creating them and turning them to account! This was all he needed for the present; the elements of an immense conflagration were collected together, the spark only was wanting; he had only to wait, his craft and his fortune would do the rest!

CHAPTER X

INSTITUTION OF TITLES OF NOBILITY AND SUPPRESSION OF THE TRIBUNATE

(*August–October* 1807)

WHILE Napoleon was doing everything to rekindle war, France, believing his promises, was celebrating the blessings of peace. The war is ended; he has said it; we know it; he is at last going to allow the exhausted country some repose, and turn his attention to her internal prosperity. He will be his own prime minister, and perform wonders in economics as great as those which have gained him his military glory. He has done enough as a general; he will now devote his genius to the development of the riches of France. He will multiply her industrial and commercial resources a hundredfold. England is not yet conquered, it is true, but what matters that, since the whole of the Continent is subdued? To reduce her, nothing more is requisite than to leave her to decline in isolation. Such were the dreams that Napoleon encouraged by declarations that were greedily welcomed.

He had been received on his return to Paris with adulation so servile that it exceeded anything that had hitherto been heard, and will be quoted by the remotest posterity whenever it is wished to show to what a depth men can sink whose minds are corrupted by servitude. 'Sire,' said Lacépède, the president of the Senate, after having exhausted the vocabulary of hyperbole, in recalling the exploits of the last campaign, 'such are the prodigies which, it might be said, required centuries to achieve, and which your Majesty

has performed in a few months. . . . We cannot worthily praise your Majesty. Your glory is too great. Only posterity will discover its immense height!' And Séguier, in the name of the Court of Appeal, said: 'Napoleon is beyond the compass of history. He is above admiration. *It is only love that can rise to him!*' The archbishop of Paris tried unsuccessfully to compete with Séguier. He declared 'that the annals of the world offered no example so marvellous and so memorable,' which appeared tame and suspiciously cold. But Frochot, prefect of the Seine, deserved the palm for the ingenious manner in which he humbled his rivals while he exalted his master. '*All these things*,' he exclaimed, engulfed in ecstasy, '*are truly beyond our capacity*. The silence of astonishment, which admiration enjoins, seems to be the only means of expressing them.'[1]

The session of the Legislative Body was opened on the 16th of August, by a speech in which Napoleon himself recounted the events which had just changed the face of Europe. In all that he had done, he said, he had only had in view *the prosperity of his people*, more dear in his eyes than his own glory. He then addressed the nation, and expressed his satisfaction with them. 'Frenchmen,' he said, 'your conduct in these last times, when your Emperor was more than five hundred leagues away, *has heightened my esteem and the opinion which I had formed of your character*. I have felt proud of being the first among you; you are a great and a good people!'

That he believed them at any rate to be a good people is clearly proved by his announcement, as a proof of his gratitude to them, '*that in order to prevent the revival of any feudal titles incompatible with the constitution of the empire*,' he had just created several imperial titles, to give new lustre to the principal of his subjects. Create new titles of nobility, in order to prevent the revival of the feudal system! He did indeed reckon on the goodness of the French people, when he offered to confer such a benefit on them, in these plain terms! It was by a trick similar to this

[1] *Moniteur* of July 29, 1807.

ingenious phraseology that in the decree which re-established state prisons Napoleon introduced an argument founded on the necessity 'of guaranteeing liberty and equality.' This precious gift was accompanied by a promise that was not so easy to perform. 'I intend,' said Napoleon, 'that in all parts of my empire, *even in the smallest hamlet*, the prosperity of the citizens and *the value of land* shall be augmented by the effect of a general system of improvements, which I have conceived.' The Emperor concluded by announcing to his faithful subjects 'that he contemplated various changes for *simplifying* and *perfecting* their institutions.' The perfecting was the creation of titles of nobility; the simplification was the suppression of the Tribunate.

The creation of the large estates, and of some of the rich endowments that were added to them, dates from the year 1806. Napoleon wished to extend and make it general by a complete system, and although the statute relative to the imperial nobility was not promulgated till the 11th of March 1808, I speak of it here because the greater part of the preparatory measures of this statute were passed several months before its promulgation. The re-establishment of the titles of nobility is one of Napoleon's acts which he was most willing to condemn at St. Helena. He had discovered, it is true, a number of advantages in this institution of which he had never dreamed at the time, among others, that of *reconciling France with Europe*,[1] an object which did not appear to occupy him much during his reign. But he admitted that in reality it had offended the taste of the nation for equality, and that it had rather injured than benefited himself. Considered with regard to its success, the measure was never popular, not even with those whose dearest wishes it was supposed to gratify. It ran counter to the ideas, the interests, and the manners and customs of the period. The privileged class previous to the Revolution regretted their ancient titles, none of them thought of claiming new ones. We see by Napoleon's correspondence that he was compelled, for instance, to order Bernadotte to assume his title of Prince of Ponte-Corvo.

[1] *Mémorial* of Las Cases.

The Legion of Honour, which is now represented as the institution from which the new titles of nobility sprang, after having been established to prevent the revival of these vain distinctions, had acquired a great popularity, though it had at first been disclaimed by all enlightened men ; but the imperial nobility, without having deserved either hatred or love in the course of its ephemeral existence, was always ridiculed by the lower classes. Why ? They would probably have been puzzled to give the reason ; in this, however, their instinct was surer than the so-called profound calculations of the creator of that artificial work.

What the people confusedly felt was that this aristocracy, created in a few hours by the capricious will of a man who thought he was supplying the work of centuries, and opened as a refuge to worn-out functionaries, was anything in the world but an aristocracy. It was free, it is true, from the greater part of the evils which belong to oligarchies, but, on the other hand, it had none of the advantages of an old nobility, and was consequently only a burdensome and superfluous body. Aristocratical institutions have had their *raison d'être* in history ; they have often held a glorious place ; they have, in spite of their vices, developed great characters, manly virtues, and formed rare examples for humanity ; but what at all times and in all countries has constituted the essence of an aristocracy is power, because there can be no aristocracy without independence. In monarchical countries especially there can be no other reason for the existence of an aristocracy than because, by its very privileges, it opposes a useful barrier to the encroachments of the power of the crown. Deprive it of this office, its utility disappears, and it is nothing more than an abuse.

In countries, too, where the aristocracy have fulfilled this important mission, they have remained dear to the nation, in spite of the evils that are inseparable from the institution, and in spite of the constant progress of civilised nations towards social equality. Wherever they have preserved a people from an absolute government, they may be said to have justified their existence, and it is easy to acquit

them. In France, on the contrary, where the aristocracy never redeemed their privileges by their services; where, with all their brilliant and generous qualities, they never showed any aptitude for politics; where, since Louis XIV. especially, they had been nothing more than a sort of complement to state pomps, and the personification of courtiership, the recollection of this institution was hateful, and it is perhaps not too much to say that it greatly contributed to pervert and lead astray the passion for equality, so often turned aside from its true end. It certainly was not as a barrier to absolute power that Napoleon revived the nobility, for he did not give them an atom of political influence. Like Louis XIV., he only regarded them as a kind of royal retinue, to increase the splendour of the throne. But the difference between the intention and the effect produced was so great, that it accounts for the ironical smile with which the new nobles were everywhere greeted. The nobility of Louis XIV. had very little real power, although they still retained a great many privileges, but they possessed at any rate old traditions, distinguished manners, an incomparable elegance, and the prestige of antiquity which commands respect, things in which Napoleon's nobility were absolutely wanting. Any aristocracy that would last must admit into their circle new men who gradually become penetrated with their spirit, and who in the metamorphose do not always escape ridicule; but what had never been seen before, was an aristocracy composed entirely of *parvenus*, a nobility of which all the members were so many *Bourgeois-gentilshommes*. These newly-created nobles were all the more awkward in their fresh position from their having no other guide than their own pretensions, and were the less capable of adding any lustre to the throne, because they derived everything from it, and were held in the strictest and most humble dependence by the Emperor.

They were absolutely devoid of political influence, and they had none of the influence of prestige, not did they answer any of the ends for which their pompous creator had made them. With regard to the motives which were

officially alleged by Cambacérès and Lacépède, the forced supporters of this measure, the public obstinately refused to believe them. It was, they said, a nobility founded upon merit and not upon privilege, a homage rendered to the worth of their ancestors, a last blow dealt to the feudal system, a new prize added to public rewards. But every one knew, since the philosophers of the eighteenth century, that merit is personal, that it is disowning it rather than encouraging it, to make its recompense hereditary. Again, the principle of this aristocratical transmission, sanctioned for the benefit of the rich, was violated to the detriment of the poor, for the statute stipulated that in order to transmit the title of *prince* it was requisite to give proof of a revenue of two hundred thousand francs; in order to transmit the title of *count*, it was requisite to give proof of a revenue of thirty thousand francs; and of fifteen thousand, and of three thousand, for the titles of *baron* and *chevalier*. The title was worth nothing without money. Deprived of this power, it dropped with the holder.

It is not less derisory to pretend that the institution was a check to privilege, and did not violate the principle of equality. Every one knew that the statute re-established entailed estates for the benefit of the ennobled families, that it authorised them to institute inalienable majorats, transmissible from male to male, by order of primogeniture, which was a derogation of the principles of the Civil Code. And, finally, it was a strange illusion to imagine that they were about to deal a decisive blow to the ancient nobility, by reviving all the privileges that had given them their strength. With regard to titles, antiquity has always taken the precedence of actual importance, and if anything could restore to those of the ancient *régime* the value that they had lost, it was assuredly this pretended regeneration of a superannuated institution. Independently of this diminution of their value arising from an inevitable comparison, these favours were rendered still more worthless in consequence of the profusion with which they were bestowed, and the way in which they were distributed. They were not awarded to certain persons by virtue of a special choice

of the sovereign, and in consideration of individual merit; they belonged by right to a certain class of functionaries, as a kind of supplementary gratuity, appertaining to their post. A man entered a government office as a simple clerk, he came out of it a count or a baron. It was a true spontaneous generation, which immediately increased the value of all the old titles. The new nobility caused the old nobility to be valued and regretted. The great dignitaries were princes; the ministers, senators, archbishops, and councillors of State were counts; the presidents of electoral colleges, the presidents of the courts of law, and the mayors of large towns were barons; the members of the Legion of Honour were chevaliers. With regard to the prefects, generals, civil and military officers, the Emperor reserved to himself the right of choosing their titles.

The imperial nobility, that singular disinterment of the customs and ideas of the ancient *régime* perverted from their true signification, was regarded by Napoleon as a purely administrative organisation. It had another merit in his eyes, that of turning to his own account all illustrious men, both young and old, of stamping them with his effigy as the smaller coin of his own glory. He wished that in new France everything should date from him, and was delighted to bury the famous names of the Republic under titles that only recalled the empire, and which suggested no other thought than that the men were his creatures. When Masséna was spoken of, people thought of the victory of Zurich; but when he was called the Duc de Rivoli, they thought of the man who had created him duke. He also hoped gradually to get rid of the old aristocracy, by inducing them to clothe themselves in his livery; and he did in fact obtain a certain number of interested adherents. He took a pleasure in making a duke of the old *régime* a count of the new, to prove the superiority of his titles.

In order to insure a preponderance of the military element in this new nobility, which he rightly considered as the mainspring of his system, he made a fresh distribution to his companions in arms of what he termed the *produce* of the war. He had always regarded this as the only

certain means of gaining their attachment and of securing their co-operation in his work. As early as the first campaign in Italy he had begun to put into practice this theory, which was openly avowed in all his proclamations; but as he had at that time only very limited means at his disposal, and was compelled to have some regard for public opinion, he could not fully carry out his ideas. Now that he had all Europe to work upon, and that no power could any longer thwart his will, he showed the full extent of views which he had hitherto only partially advanced. This system was in reality no other than that of a barbarous conqueror distributing to his companions the lands and riches of the vanquished. In Italy, in Poland, in Hanover, and in Westphalia, Napoleon had seized domains to the amount of two hundred and fifty millions of francs. He was, it is said, the rightful possessor since the lands had belonged to the ancient sovereigns of the country, either ecclesiastical or secular, and were not the spoils of the people: a sophism convenient for the spoilers, for if victory gives the conqueror a right to the property of the conquered, Napoleon was as much entitled to the lands of the people as to those of the sovereign. How can it be maintained, however, that the nation had no right to domains which were national property, and that they could see them pass into the hands of a stranger or an enemy with indifference?

Napoleon left a part of these domains to the crowned servants whom he had appointed to reign over these different countries with an external show of royalty. The remainder, amounting to a sum of about a hundred and fifty millions of francs, he distributed to his principal generals, under the form of majorats. With these gifts, which were afterwards increased, several of them had as much as a million of francs a year. At the same time, being anxious to satisfy by a readier means that need of enjoyment which had been developed to such a fearful degree among soldiers who had lost all their ancient patriotic ambition, and who felt that the future was very uncertain under so exacting a master, he deducted a sum of eleven million francs from the foreign contributions, and gave it to them, half in ready

money, and half in government annuities. Berthier had a million, Ney, Davoust, Soult, and Bessières each had six hundred thousand francs, Masséna, Augereau, Bernadotte, Mortier, and Victor each four hundred thousand, and the others in proportion. A sum of eighteen millions was divided between the officers and soldiers according to their services and wounds.

The pensions which Napoleon bestowed upon his principal civilians were so small compared with those of the army, that it was impossible to misunderstand his intention of marking in an unmistakable manner the superiority of the military over the civil service. In this he was consistent with his political system; he acted as the dictator and tribune of that military democracy which had elected him for their chief. Being no longer able to give them at home the spoils of the ancient privileged classes, he applied a sort of agrarian law to foreign nations by means of conquest. Even when he created a new nobility, these dupes of fanaticism continued to look upon him as their Gracchus as well as their Cæsar. They forgave him for having made dukes, because he had made one out of the son of a peasant, and they believed that their own fortune would increase indefinitely like his own, thanks to that inexhaustible *ager publicus* which was Europe.

The definite suppression of the Tribunate, which had been announced in ambiguous terms in the imperial opening speech, was adjourned to the end of the Legislative Session. Before informing the Assembly of this final change, it was thought well to let them once more go through that increasingly useless and short ceremony which was called a session. The session of 1807 was inaugurated by one of those brilliant *exposés de situation*, in which deification took the place of defence, and which seemed to be given for no other reason than to intimate to the members what was to be the tone of their speeches. This intimation was carefully observed. The legislative work was henceforth reduced to voting. There were no more difficulties raised, no more unforeseen incidents, no more contradiction; even discussion ceased. The legislative debates of

the year 1807, although they were on a great variety of very important bills—among others, one relative to the Code of Commerce—do not amount to the twentieth part of those of a session of the Consulate; and not to a hundredth part, if we omit the speeches that were simply laudatory. All the real work was done by the Council of State, the tribunate approved, the Legislative Body ratified. It was an uninterrupted stream of admiration, in which enthusiasm, love, and gratitude towards the sovereign overflowed at every instant and on every occasion. Open this immense collection at random, read a speech, the first that comes to hand: 'Gentlemen, the genius that governs us sees everything, and neglects nothing.' . . . To what exploit, to what fresh benefit was the speaker alluding? To a bill relative to the *registry of mortgages.*[1]

How much sincerity could there be, after all, in praise in which there was neither moderation nor dignity? There was the dazzled admiration of success. This feeling was sincere, for there was ground for it, and even now, after all the events which have shown us how ephemeral the splendour was, it is difficult not to be dazzled by it. Still, notwithstanding the fantastic picture which Cretet, minister of the interior, drew of our state of prosperity; notwithstanding these triumphs, more brilliant than lasting, those great works announced with so much noise, but for the most part only carried out on paper; notwithstanding the 13,400 leagues of roads, the eighteen rivers rendered navigable, the ten canals finished or begun; notwithstanding the improvement in wool, and the 'seven national sheepfolds,' the loans to manufacturers, and those decennial prizes that were never distributed; notwithstanding useful buildings like the public granaries, and ostentatious monuments like the Vendôme Column; notwithstanding, in short, that delusive peace, of which Cretet said 'that the conqueror had signed it *without stipulating any advantage for himself*'—that peace which no longer existed, even then, when it was exalted in these lying terms; notwithstanding so many brilliant

[1] Sitting of September 3, 1807. Discours de Mouricault (*Archives Parlementaires*).

and specious appearances, France did not possess either true prosperity or true greatness.

She was not really prosperous; for not only was there no feeling of security, a necessary condition for the welfare of nations, but all the evils produced by so many years of war still weighed heavily on her; and it was an insult to public good sense to try to induce a belief by means of such gross lies that they had suddenly disappeared, as if they had been made to vanish by magic. She was not really great, for all her great men had either been banished or put to silence. She could still point with pride to her generals and soldiers, although the army, which, if brave as ever, had gradually sunk from the worship of the country and liberty to that of glory, and from the worship of glory to that of riches, was corrupt and degenerate; but where were her great citizens? Where were her great orators, her great politicians, her great philosophers, her great writers of every kind? Where, at least, were their descendants?

All who had shown a spark of genius or pride had been sacrificed for the benefit of a single man. They had disappeared; some crushed under the wheels of his chariot, others forced to live obscurely in some unknown retreat, and, what was graver still, their race seemed extinct. The evil was not the effect of a momentary crisis, it affected the future, and seemed as if it would last for ever. France was imprisoned, as it were, in an iron net, and the issues were closed to all the generous and ardent youth that had either intellectual or moral activity. Yes, whatever may have been said, France suffered during these stifling years in which all that was most noble and most elevated in her genius was condemned to a dull and silent sterility. It was not with indifference that a nation who had occupied so high a rank in the civilised world recognised that they had no longer either eloquence or poetry or any intellectual life. They were sick at heart, and, to use an expression of Lafayette's, 'they must have been heroes not to have given way in despair at the prætorian victories.' Who can say how many generous lives were at that time consumed in

obscure anxiety? History will probably never lift up more than a corner of the veil. It is certain that the greater part of the eminent men whose youth passed away in this unfortunate time, in which hope itself seemed to have forsaken them, always spoke of it later with a kind of horror. Their noble sufferings have left but few traces, and even their memory has perished. They are only revealed to the historian by the depth of the silence; but there remains one immortal testimony in a page written in words that burn, and which will live as long as our language is spoken among men. At the very moment that Napoleon made his triumphal entry in the midst of a prostrate people, and when the air was resounding with the noise of official cheers, a number of manuscript copies of this avenging page, which was first printed in the *Mercure*, were circulated from hand to hand, distributed by invisible enemies, and read with insatiable eagerness. This is what it contained :—

'When, in the silence of abjection, nothing is heard but the chains of the slave and the voice of the informer; when all tremble before the tyrant, when it is as dangerous to receive his favours as to incur his displeasure, the historian appears charged with the vengeance of peoples. It is in vain that Nero prospers; Tacitus is born in the empire, he grows up unknown beside the ashes of Germanicus, and Providence has already given over the glory of the master of the world to an obscure child. If the work of the historian is noble, it is often dangerous; but there are altars like that of honour, which, though abandoned, still demand sacrifices. God is not annihilated because his temple is deserted. Wherever the least chance of Fortune remains, there is no heroism in tempting her. Magnanimous actions are those of which the certain result is misfortune or death. After all, what does it matter that we have reverses, if our name, when pronounced by posterity, will cause a generous heart to beat two thousand years after our death.'[1]

[1] This page is the beginning of an article by Chateaubriand on the *Voyage Pittoresque et Historique en Espagne*, by De Laborde (*Mercure de France* of July 4, 1807). In the printed article several passages are

The day that Chateaubriand wrote these immortal lines, on seeing the triumph of force and the discouragement, the distress, and the terror of all who still retained a love of liberty, he personified the very soul of France. He held language that was worthy of her, and took his rank among those great writers whose voice resounds through centuries. His most famous books may be forgotten, but this page will remain connected with the recollection of the empire, as an indelible stigma, and is the protest of that minority that was sacrificed, whose murmurs could no longer even find an echo. The visionary that day did the deed of a man. He has been accused of having shown a great deal of inconsistency, of littleness, and petty vanity, in his life; even his literary glory has been attacked by those who flattered him the most. Chateaubriand had almost all the failings of a man whose character is governed by his imagination; but this burst of a generous mind cancels everything, and for one short moment the poet was truly great. He rose by a sudden flight to those sublime regions in which genius is confounded with heroism.

Chateaubriand escaped punishment, thanks to the intervention of his friend Fontanes, and to events abroad which diverted Napoleon's attention. The writer came off with the confiscation of his share in the *Mercure*, which was in reality the whole of his fortune. It is to anxieties of the same kind that we may attribute the fact that Napoleon allowed General Malet to go comparatively unpunished, after the discovery of an attempt at a conspiracy, similar to that which had almost succeeded in 1812. This plot, which was laid during the long uncertainty of the campaign of Poland, was detected by the police before it was carried into execution. But its originator was skilful enough to conceal its real character from the once searching eye of

found inserted between the beginning and the end of the page, among others this: 'Very soon the author of the *Annales* will only look upon the deified tyrant as a *stage-player, an incendiary, and a parricide.* Like those first Christians of Egypt, who, at the risk of their lives, penetrated the temples of idolatry, seized in the depths of the gloomy sanctuary the divinity to which crime offered the incense of fear, *and dragged to the light of day, instead of a god, some horrible monster.*'

the Emperor, who confined himself to detaining Malet in one of the prisons of state without bringing him to trial. Napoleon's mind was more and more absorbed by the great difficulties of his foreign policy, and notwithstanding his astonishing activity, he was overwhelmed by the immense amount of business, and was obliged to discharge a great deal of it in a careless and negligent manner. Ever since he had had the management of the affairs of nearly the whole of Europe, he could no longer give more than a cursory glance to those of France; he merely examined them superficially, only paying attention to details by fits and starts, and aimed at nothing more than producing a general effect. And, as instead of giving more liberty of action to his fellow-workers he made them more dependent on him, it followed that the greater part of the acts of his home policy were either reckless and shallow, or were mere plans, like those monuments announced with so much ostentation, which he left to future governments to complete. But if several of these schemes were only intended for effect, and rather resembled the decorations of a theatre than substantial edifices, some few among them were suggested by a correct knowledge of the needs of the country.

We can, for instance, speak with unreserved praise of the law which established in several departments houses where mendicants were furnished with food and work, preparatory to the suppression of mendicity; of the adoption of the Code of Commerce; the impulsion given to the work of constructing canals; the institution of the Caisse de Service, founded by Mollien to substitute the Treasury itself for the bankers, who took such a heavy discount on the bills of the receivers-general. This last measure was excellent, for it did away with a stock-jobbing that was ruinous to the State. It was the work of this minister alone, as well as another improvement that was not less successful; I mean the introduction of the system of accounts by double entry into our finances. The reduction of the interest at the Bank to four per cent facilitated commercial and industrial transactions, and by turning the Commission of Accounts, which had long been recognised

as insufficient, into a Court of Accounts, which from its rank and number was much better able to do the work, the affairs of the State were liquidated with more order, intelligence, and expedition. Every one of these measures was excellent from almost all points.

The organisation of the Court of Accounts was however open to some criticisms. If it did, as experience proved, insure accuracy and expedition in financial affairs, it was still in many respects very inferior to the institution which supplied its place under the ancient *régime*, and still more so to the one which had been created by the Revolution. The old Chambers of Accounts were sovereign courts. They passed judgments, while the new court was placed in strict dependence on the executive power. Ever since the Constituent, the staff of accountants had been composed of commissioners named by the Legislative Body, and were subject to their control. The principle may have been badly applied; the accountants were not so good as could have been desired, nor was their number sufficient. The five commissioners, who were increased to seven by the Constitution of the Year VIII, were overwhelmed by the mass of accounts in arrear; but in this, as in almost everything else, the legislators of 1789 had displayed both judgment and sagacity. It is in fact to those who vote the taxes that belongs the right of controlling the employment of the public funds. In default of this natural and advantageous subordination of the Court of Accounts to the Legislative Body, there was only one way of organising it which would guarantee its integrity, and that was to give to it the complete independence of a judiciary body. But such an institution would have been a perfect anomaly in the imperial administration. Napoleon therefore constituted the Court of Accounts as he had constituted everything; he made it an instrument of power. He divided it into three chambers, which answered to a similar division of the work with which the court was charged. He gave the men large salaries, he made them irremovable; but he restricted their power, and reduced them to a body of functionaries. Under the ancient *régime* they had been magistrates. He

gave them the right of controlling the agents of the Government, but for the benefit of the Government itself, and not for the benefit of the State. The distinction is easy to understand. Every government has an interest in being served by honest accountants, who will verify the receipts as well as the expenditure of the funds that are confided to them; and the Court of Accounts did this remarkably well. But honesty is still more necessary in the minister who orders the expenditure than in the agent who carries out his orders; for how often has it not been seen that power has become a source of profit, and has been sought by a disgraceful speculation in public money? In this the Court of Accounts was absolutely powerless; it was nothing but an administrative machinery, placed in the hands of the very minister who ought to have controlled it. 'The court,' said the eighteenth article of the law, 'can in no case claim any jurisdiction over the ministers' (*ordonnateurs*). And Defermon added, by way of explanation: 'The court is to examine strictly the work of the accountable agents, and not that of the *ordonnateurs*. . . . It would be impossible for them to apprehend the motives which have given rise to certain commands. They are not called upon to pass judgment on the Government.'[1] Without passing judgment, they might have summoned the Ministry before the Legislative Body, who were their natural judges. Even in affairs that came under the jurisdiction of the court, its decisions were not without appeal, for the agent condemned had always three months to refer it to the Council of State. The Government was therefore in reality its own judge; and neither in financial affairs, any more than in others, had the nation either control or redress.

This radical vice of all the new institutions appeared in a much more menacing form in a Senatus Consultum, dated October 12th. This law, to use an expression of Treilhard, was a *purging measure*, which would rid the magistracy of the corrupt element that had crept into it, and separate the pure gold from the dross that disgraced it. This purging was a fresh blow dealt to the judiciary power,

[1] *Archives Parlementaires.* Sitting of September 5, 1807.

already so weak and so dependent. The Constitution of the Year VIII had established the irremovability of the judges. This guarantee, which was a very insufficient barrier against the temptations of promotion and dread of the severity of the Ministers, had been weakened till it was nothing more than a shadow. The right of supervision and of admonition given to the grand judge, and the disciplinary and suspensory jurisdiction attributed to the Court of Cassation, had placed the magistrates at the mercy of the Government. These means of restraint, combined with those of ordinary justice, were more than sufficient, for there was no need of so many different arms to reach prevaricating magistrates, and it was still more important to secure the independence of upright judges. There existed another repressive law, which under the consular *régime* declared that every judge forfeited his office whose name was not kept on the list of eligible persons, a superfluous penalty that had become inapplicable with the system of electoral colleges. The repeal of this law served as a pretext for overthrowing the weak barrier which still protected the magistrates against ministerial power. The Senatus Consultum decreed that there should be a general examination of the magistracy.

This examination was entrusted to a commission of ten senators named by his Imperial Majesty, who were to give a final decision with regard to the maintenance or dismissal of the judges pointed out in the report of the commissioners. This measure was the complete destruction of the principle of irremovability, for if the Emperor had the right to decree it one day, who could guarantee the judges against his will the next? The engagements which Treilhard made for the future were therefore simply illusory. And as if they did not feel sufficiently tranquillised by this great purging, it was decreed by another article of the Senatus Consultum that henceforth the judges would not be appointed for life, unless after five years' exercise of their functions they were deemed worthy by the Emperor.

In reality, this outrage on the honour of the magistracy and on the independence of the judges was nothing more

than a miserable political expedient. At the time of the organisation of the judicial body a great number of disheartened republicans had sought refuge in an honourable office, in which they were aloof from politics. Since then immense changes had taken place; and the need was felt of having judges more in harmony with the new ideas and customs. But as there was nothing in the conduct of almost any of these men on which the Government could lay hold, they had recourse to this indirect and underhand means of dismissing them.[1] No one is safe under despotic Governments, not even those whose positions they have created. And they are always the first to attack the laws that they have made, for it is their essential characteristic to have no other guide than their own humour.

The Legislative Body concluded their short session by voting, without examination and without discussion, the budget, which was only presented to them as a form. The estimates were only roughly made. Not only was the expenditure of the current year, fixed at seven hundred and twenty millions, estimated much below its actual amount, which was in reality seven hundred and eighty millions, but none of the budgets of the five previous years had been entirely liquidated, and the Government was still gathering taxes that were in arrear since the year 1802. All the accounts presented by the Government were based upon hypothetical estimates. Seven hundred millions were supposed to have sufficed for the year 1806; the expenditure was even roughly calculated at six hundred and eighty-nine millions; it had amounted to seven hundred and seventy millions, and no one was then aware of it. The receipts had fortunately risen far higher than had been expected, owing to the war centimes and the establishment of the *droits réunis*, but the Legislative Body knew no more about this amount than about that of the expenditure. It was roughly estimated at somewhere about seven hundred and twenty millions. Everything was left in an unsettled state, so that it might all be adjusted according to the Emperor's good pleasure. The evident insufficiency of the

[1] Thibaudeau.

receipts to meet these different deficits did not hinder Napoleon from taking off the ten-centime war tax, which he had put on at the time of the rupture with England. He only asked for six hundred millions for the expenditure of the year 1808. He had in fact an easy way of clearing up all these arrears, thanks to the sixty millions levied upon Austria in 1806, and the six hundred millions levied upon Prussia in 1807, and he made free use of it. After deducting what was required to meet the increase in the expenditure, for the payments and rewards of the army, for the sums that had to be advanced to the Treasury and to the Caisse de Service, there must have remained about three hundred millions, a formidable lever in his active hands, and which, under the name of Treasury of the Army, was at once a reserve fund in case of need and a guarantee against unforeseen contingencies. These three hundred millions, which he kept with jealous care, and on which he feasted his covetous eyes, were his supreme resource for bad days; it was his safeguard against a possible change of fortune; it was money with which he could play his last game with Europe.

When the Legislative Body had tractably passed all the bills that had been submitted to their approval, they were informed on the day of the close of the session of the Senatus Consultum which suppressed the Tribunate. It is true that the abolition of the Tribunate was but the suppression of a word. Repeated purgings and improvements had long since reduced this body to a mere shadow of a deliberative assembly, or, as Boulay de la Meurthe said in his report, 'a vice which implied a contradiction.'[1]

We may add that the Legislative Body itself might have been suppressed without the slightest inconvenience, so little influence did it exercise over the Government and the course of things. Either by his decrees, his Senatus Consulta, or simply by a decision of the Council of State, Napoleon settled the greater part of the questions which have at all times been the province of the legislative power. He had, for instance, just decreed by a simple opinion of the section

[1] Sitting of September 18, 1807.

of legislation in the Council of State that the right of deciding questions of dispossession for public purposes belonged to the Government, and not to the Legislative Body, who had hitherto possessed this prerogative. But the Legislative Body was an assembly which he still felt he had need of; its name reminded him, moreover, of seven years of silence and servility, while that of the Tribunate only awoke the odious recollection of legal resistance and firm and moderate patriotism. After having driven out of this assembly the courageous minority that had dared to brave his tyranny, he had gradually reduced it to fifty members, filled it with his creatures, and divided it into sections who only debated in secret committee. Finally, he had withdrawn from the tribunes their most important privileges, and had transferred them to the Senate. But, in spite of his efforts to disparage them, the name of the Tribunate had retained a certain popular prestige. The eloquence of its orators had been the last gasp of expiring liberty, the last echo of the generous accents of the French Revolution. These shattered ruins recalled the edifice, they reminded the nation that they had known brighter days, higher ambitions; they represented, in a word, traditions vanquished to-day, but which might triumph to-morrow, for nothing that honours, raises, and ennobles human nature, is ever definitely vanquished. For all these reasons the very name of the Tribunate was obnoxious and must be got rid of.

Boulay de la Meurthe was accordingly sent to inform the Tribunate, in Napoleon's name, that they had ceased to exist. He did ample justice to the virtues of the members of this assembly. They had, he said, *constantly shown themselves wiser than the institution itself*, but since the establishment of the empire the Tribunate had become a *useless body that was out of place and out of harmony with the epoch*, and its abolition 'was not so much a change, as an improvement, in our institutions.' The three sections were transferred to the Legislative Body, who were to debate with closed doors, and give their opinion in conjunction with the orators of the Council of State. The

actual members of the Tribunate were offered an asylum in the bosom of the Legislative Body. Those whose time had expired were placed, some in the new Court of Accounts, and the rest in different Government offices. But lest the Legislative Body, so long mute, should be intoxicated by the inestimable privilege that was accorded them of debating in secret committee, and of expressing their opinion in public by the mouth of a commission, the Senatus Consultum decided 'that in future no one could be a member of the Legislative Body *who was under forty years of age*' (Article 10). This man, who had been a general in the Italian army at twenty-six, First Consul at thirty, and who even then, at thirty-eight, was Emperor and ruler of so many kingdoms, would not allow others to take part in public affairs before they had reached an age which he himself had not yet attained,—an insolent regulation which showed how much he regarded himself as a being far superior to other men, and especially how much he felt it his duty to distrust youth and its noble passions. With such precautions there was little fear that the Legislative Body would abuse the liberty that was restored to it. It was with a well-grounded confidence that the poet Fontanes, who celebrated with invariable enthusiasm all the acts both good and bad of Napoleon's policy, exclaimed 'that these walls, which were astonished at their silence,—a silence that was about to cease—*would not hear the roar of popular tempests.*' They were in fact well protected from anything of the kind. 'Let us show ourselves worthy of such a benefit,' he continued; 'let there be no storms in the Tribune, let the modest triumph of reason alone be applauded. Let truth especially be spoken with courage, but also with wisdom, and let it shine with all its light. A great prince cannot but love its splendour. It alone is worthy of him; why should he fear it? The more we look at him, and the higher he rises, the more we esteem and admire him.' The orator displayed as much care in embellishing his adulation as a jeweller would take in setting his diamonds. He forgot that nothing makes base sentiments more conspicuous than clothing them in fine language.

It was not enough to abolish the Tribunate; they were expected to show joy and gratitude for the blow that had put an end to their political existence. 'I propose,' said Carion Nisas, 'that we present an address to the throne which will convince the world that we have received the act of the Senate without any regret for our office, any uneasiness for the country; but with feelings of love and devotion to the monarch, which will live eternally in our hearts!' The proposition was unanimously adopted, and the Tribunate raised their voices for the last time before they sank into oblivion. The tribunes asserted that in the act which put an end to their functions 'they had only found fresh reasons for expressing *their homage, their admiration, and their gratitude to the Emperor* . . . they did not feel so much that their career was over, as that they had attained the end of their efforts and the reward of their devotions.'[1] This despicable language proves better than any reflections what a series of changes the Tribunate had passed through before the fatal blow was dealt. Thus perished, in the disrepute into which its own creator had brought it, an assembly whose works had honoured the cause of French liberty. It had in reality ceased to exist long before its final dissolution, but its disappearance was nevertheless a significant fact for any one who reflects. What, after all, was this *constitution of the empire* of which the name so often recurred in official manifestoes, if a stroke of the pen sufficed to abolish any one of the great bodies of the State? Was not the whole of the constitution in the hand that held the pen?

It is now time to return to the situation of Spain, and to relate the events which had forestalled Napoleon's expectations there.

[1] *Archives Parlementaires.* Sitting of September 13, 1807.

CHAPTER XI

THE PLOT OF THE ESCURIAL—JUNOT IN PORTUGAL, AND NAPOLEON IN ITALY

(*October* 1807–*January* 1808)

We left Junot and his army entering Spain, with orders to invade Portugal and take possession of it for Napoleon, contrary to the stipulations of the treaty of Fontainebleau, which had been violated directly it was concluded. We have seen him cross these friendly countries, everywhere making plans on his way for unknown operations, while a second army of forty thousand men had assembled on the frontier of Spain. These threatening indications of Napoleon's intentions with regard to the court of Madrid, though not yet known, were at the same time confirmed by the steps of our ambassador, Beauharnais, which gave them an additional meaning and throw a fresh light on history. Beauharnais, who had succeeded General Beurnonville at Madrid, was a former member of the Constituent, an old soldier of Condé's army, and brother to Josephine's first husband. A simple and loyal mind, full of illusion and good intention, perfectly capable of yielding to generous impulses, this ambassador was the last man to penetrate the calculations of the policy that he was about to serve. It was for this very reason that he had been chosen, for his straightforwardness inspired confidence, and Napoleon, who always liked zealous servants, did not care for them to be too clear-sighted. He wanted a devoted and notoriously honourable agent at Madrid, whose perspicacity would never become inconvenient, and who would deceive others the

more easily, because he would himself be the first deceived. That he recognised Beauharnais as the man who best united these requirements, when he appointed him ambassador in the month of March 1807, is scarcely to be supposed; but what is certain is, that either by chance or by design, he had in him the person that he needed, that he made him play this part, and that he would not easily have found a man better fitted for it by his good qualities as well as by his faults. The most fertile mind is necessarily limited in its contrivances. Both in war and in politics Napoleon repeated his stratagems so often that his method might be reduced to a certain number of invariable proceedings. On this occasion he was his own plagiarist. The getting up of the Spanish affair presents a striking analogy to that of Venice, and Beauharnais was about to accept the same mission to the court of Madrid that Villetard had accomplished in 1797 to the Venetian Republic, with no less blindness and trust. There is a certain kind of work that in general is only given to discredited agents; the rare art consists in getting it performed by honourable men.

As soon as Beauharnais arrived at Madrid, he became the centre of the innumerable intrigues of a weak and divided court, for whom Napoleon's representative was a formidable man whose influence must be gained. Between an unpopular favourite, hateful to the nation on account of his levity and his complaisance towards the foreigner, hateful to Napoleon by his inclination to revolt, and a young prince, who as yet was only known by his antipathy to this same favourite, the preference of the ambassador could not be doubtful, and his instructions were not of a nature to change his disposition. All his sympathy would naturally be given to the Prince of the Asturias, were it only out of opposition to the Prince of the Peace, maintaining however that reserve which his office commanded. The internal divisions of the court of Spain had recently assumed a character of extreme animosity, as is always the case when such dissensions find an aliment in national passions and real troubles. After useless efforts to disarm and gain the Prince of the Asturias by making him wed his own

sister-in-law, Donna Maria Luisa de Bourbon, Manuel Godoy had thought of nothing more than turning the royal favour to advantage for the increase of his own power, in order to place himself in a position to make his own conditions at a given moment, and render the hatred of his enemies as powerless in the future as it was in the present. Hence the new dignities which he had in some sort conferred on himself, the title of Highness, the office of grand admiral, of colonel-general of the king's military household, and that Principality of the Algarves in Portugal which he had obtained by the Treaty of Fontainebleau as a safe refuge from the expected persecution. These precautions, of which the meaning was clear to every one, and magnified by rumours which estimated the wealth that he had accumulated at enormous sums, had only exasperated the adversaries of the Prince of the Peace and increased the indignation of the people. It was currently reported that he had gone so far as to wish to change the order of succession to the throne, and had even dreamed of a change of dynasty.

While he was doing everything to strengthen his position and add something more to that insolent fortune which excited so much envy, his supposed victim, the Prince of the Asturias, was living in retirement and isolation, with affected sadness, an object of suspicion to his own family and in almost open hostility to the king, his father. He was carrying on secret intrigues with all malcontents, offering to the ambitious the perspective of the favours of a new reign, and to the people the chimerical hope of seeing humiliated Spain regenerated. In reality the contest was not between Charles IV. and his son the Prince of the Asturias, but between two favourites, one of whom, Manuel Godoy, was the favourite of the father, and the other, Juan Escoiquiz, the favourite of the son. This canon, the former tutor of the Prince of the Asturias, was an ambitious and conceited man, of much literary fatuity, who revealed his quality by translating first Milton's *Paradise Lost* and then *Monsieur Botte* by Pigault Lebrun. Of a reckless activity, that was concealed under ecclesiastical gravity, of a narrow mind though not devoid of a certain finesse, ignorant of

the world and of its affairs, but convinced that a knowledge of books gave him a knowledge of men, Escoiquiz only looked upon the office that he held near the heir to the crown as an easy means of acquiring an influence over his pupil. He hoped some day to play the same part under the reign of Ferdinand that Godoy was playing under the reign of Charles. Though banished to Toledo after his first intrigues, the crafty canon had returned to Madrid in the month of March 1807, and had resumed his plots with an activity that was quickened by a desire for vengeance.

Escoiquiz was not long in learning the feelings of Beauharnais, and resolved to turn them to account for the Prince of the Asturias. He knew that the king and the court trembled before Napoleon. If he could gain so powerful a protection, the credit of the favourite, already shaken with the nation, and no longer sustained by the foolish infatuation of the queen and the blindness of the king, would be forced to yield to so many united influences. The means of gaining Napoleon's friendship was very simple, according to the canon. The Emperor of the French had shown himself very partial to royal alliances; it was therefore only requisite to ask him for the hand of a princess of imperial blood for the Prince of the Asturias. Escoiquiz accordingly called on the ambassador of France in the month of July 1807, and in this first interview communicated to him the singular request. Beauharnais, delighted with the demand, but rightly fearing lest he should compromise himself,—so unusual was such a step on the part of the heir apparent to a throne without the knowledge of his father,—promised to refer the matter to his Government. He did in part transmit this demand, first in obscure terms, then with the clearest and most circumstantial particulars. Napoleon ordered him to encourage these overtures, but to say that they were too vague for him to enter into any formal engagement. Beauharnais accordingly continued his mysterious interviews with Escoiquiz, and tried to induce him to go a step further. He continued them not only with the authorisation of the Emperor, but by his express command. And

Napoleon was so anxious that Beauharnais should be deceived, in order to render his language more persuasive, that he left him in ignorance of the conclusion of the treaty of Fontainebleau, which was an unheard-of thing, without a precedent in diplomacy. If he had divulged the personal advantages which this treaty conferred on Godoy, by the retrocession of the Algarves, he would have put an end to the advances which the ambassador was making to Ferdinand; he would have disclosed the perfidy of this double dealing, to which Beauharnais would certainly have refused any longer to lend himself. It appears however that Napoleon, ashamed of employing his agent in such intrigues, or rather fearing to find himself compromised, at one time entertained the idea of forbidding Beauharnais to go any further. There exists, in fact, a letter addressed to Champagny, in which the Emperor expresses his strong disapprobation at the measures which he had himself advised, and his dread of seeing his ambassador fall into the snare that had been laid for him.[1] But this letter was either only a disavowal in anticipation of failure, or it was cancelled by subsequent instructions; for Beauharnais, instead of putting an end to this dangerous negotiation, carried it on more vigorously than ever, and carried it on with the authorisation of his Government. He had already by his perseverance freed it from all the vagueness with which Napoleon had at first found fault. The 30th of September he complained that he had only verbal promises; he required guarantees before he went any further in this affair. On the 12th of October he at length received through Escoiquiz a kind of petition addressed to the Emperor of the French, dated the 11th, and signed by the Prince of the Asturias. The young prince lifted up his voice to 'the hero who cast into oblivion all those who had preceded him,' and after having depicted the state of oppression in which he lived, implored 'his paternal protection,' and begged 'to be allowed the honour of allying himself with the imperial family.'

It is unnecessary to point out the gravity of such steps

[1] Dated October 7, 1807.

under a monarchical government. The demand in marriage, however disrespectful of paternal rights it may have been, was nothing in comparison with this denunciation of a father by his son, and the appeal to the intervention of a foreign sovereign. This letter, read in conjunction with other documents of a still more compromising nature, which were drawn up at the same time by the counsellors of the Prince of the Asturias, who were shortly after to be arrested in his house, constitutes a regular conspiracy, if not against the king himself, at any rate against his Government.

Such was the precise point to which Napoleon brought the affairs of Spain at the time of the signing of the treaty of Fontainebleau. While his troops were crossing the territory of the Peninsula, with formal orders not to fulfil any of the conditions of the treaty, or were assembling on the frontier on the pretext of causing it to be respected, his agents at Madrid were secretly encouraging the son to revolt against his father. Ready to take advantage of their intrigues, which he directed, and henceforth possessor of this important document, in which his justice was implored, he quietly waited for a favourable opportunity. He could, by choosing his time, interfere as the knightly protector of innocence or the avenger of the disregarded rights of royal and paternal authority. The situation was admirably prepared for his entrance on the scene, and if, as those maintain who see no connection between these different events, chance alone produced opportunities so ingeniously combined, we are forced to admit that chance not only strangely favoured him, but also displayed remarkable art in doing so.

Napoleon was, however, obliged to decide what course he would pursue rather sooner than he had expected, in consequence of an event that may be easily understood in the state of discord which then reigned at the court of Madrid. The Prince of the Asturias was closely watched. It was noticed that he spent his nights in writing, and that he secretly kept up a very active correspondence. The king, whose suspicions were already roused, had his papers

suddenly seized on the 28th of October, and the following day, the 29th, he ordered him to surrender his sword, and constituted him a prisoner in his apartments of the Escurial. The papers that were seized comprised, first, a memorial, in his own handwriting, in which he denounced to the king a supposed conspiracy of the Prince of the Peace, who, according to him, had conceived the project of exterminating the whole of the royal family in order to open himself a way to the throne; secondly, a memorial of Escoiquiz in support of the demand in marriage of a French princess; lastly, a cipher destined for the correspondence of the prince. The memorial of Ferdinand contained in covert terms a very clear allusion to the queen's connection with the Prince of the Peace. This revelation, so abominable on the part of a son, bore, we must admit, a striking analogy to the denunciation which Napoleon had himself made to the king some years before. The king, moreover, was treated with the greatest respect in these different documents, and there is nothing in them which indicates that the authors had thought of making an attempt on his life. But the queen was represented as the accomplice of the favourite, and Ferdinand's avowals soon caused the discovery of a far more serious offence against the king himself. It was a decree written and signed by the Prince of the Asturias, but with the date in blank, in which he authorised the Duke de l'Infantado to take the military command of New Castille, after the death of the king his father. What was the meaning of such an order, and what explanation could be given of it? The prince alleged a short illness which the king had had some time before, and his wish to have everything prepared in case of his death. But when a man makes preparations for such a misfortune, he is not far from wishing for it; and this act was of a kind to receive still more unfavourable interpretations.

The credulous Charles IV., exaggerating the importance of these criminal intrigues, and excited by the queen, whose irritation may be easily conceived, since she was outraged both as a woman and as a sovereign, persuaded himself that

he had just escaped a regular conspiracy against his crown and his life. He publicly denounced the culprit in a proclamation addressed to the Spanish people, and announced that he was going to commence proceedings against him as well as his accomplices. He so little suspected that Napoleon could have anything to do with these plots, that he wrote to him as a friend, and with touching simplicity informed him of the sorrow that afflicted him. He notified to him his intention of punishing the prince by revoking the law which called him to the succession to the throne. In conclusion he besought him 'to assist him with his understanding and his counsels.'

This letter was dated October 29, 1807. The next day the king wrote a second, which has not been published but of which the existence is certain, complaining of Beauharnais, of whose intrigues he was as yet only partially aware.[1] Napoleon was still at Fontainebleau, and could not consequently have received it, together with the accounts of the scenes at the Escurial, before the 7th or 8th of November. He had prepared everything for the invasion of Spain —the troops as well as the pretexts. This sudden event, however, had forestalled his expectations.

We see by one of his letters to Clarke, minister of war, dated November 3d, that the second corps of observation of the Gironde, commanded by Dupont, would not be ready for action before the 1st of December. The letters of the king of Spain, and the news which he received from Madrid, made him suddenly alter his resolutions. This change of mind took place between the 8th and 11th of November. He believed that his whole plan was unmasked; he overwhelmed Masserano, the *official* ambassador of the court of Madrid, with threats; and declared that since they had dared to calumniate Beauharnais, he should march against Spain. At the same time he wrote two long letters to Clarke. In the first he directed him to hasten the departure of Dupont and his regiments. There were to be no halting-places; they were to pass on without stopping any-

[1] See, in the collection of documents published by Llorente, Izquierdo's letters to Godoy, dated November 16 and 17, 1807.

where. Clarke was to order *with the greatest secrecy the immediate arming of all the towns on the frontier of Spain;* he was to send large quantities of supplies even to places in the *Eastern Pyrenees.* 'These supplies, which will be seen there,' he wrote, 'must be said to be for the army of the Gironde.' But this army of the Gironde, which followed so closely Junot's corps, no longer appeared to him sufficient, and he wrote to Clarke another letter, still more urgent than the first. He wished a third army to be formed out of regiments drafted from the depots on the banks of the Rhine, and sent to the Spanish frontier under the name of *Corps of Observation of the Ocean.* In order that this movement might be effected with the greatest rapidity, Clarke was to send off troops *by post* from Metz, from Nancy, and from Sedan, towards Bordeaux. All the available troops that remained of cavalry, cuirassiers, chasseurs, dragoons, and hussars, Napoleon sent to the Pyrenees, and it was no longer Dupont's corps, but this new army that was to be on the Spanish frontier by the 1st of December. 'You will direct the generals,' he wrote to Clarke, 'to issue proclamations to encourage the soldiers, and explain to them the necessity of quick marches, in *order to go to the relief of the army of Portugal, which is threatened by the landing of an English army.*'[1] At the same time he made the hundred thousand men who occupied Germany execute a retrogade movement, so as to have them near at hand. He recalled a portion of them to France; the others were brought back from the Vistula to the Elbe and the Oder.

This extraordinary haste clearly proves that Napoleon had from the first moment conceived the plan, which he afterwards carried out, of presenting himself to Spain as the supreme arbiter between Charles IV. and his son. Armed with the letter of the son invoking his protection, and the letter from the father accusing his son, he felt that the opportunity was come for interference; and he seized it with feverish impatience. Nevertheless, the following day, the 12th of November, *at four o'clock in the morning*, he again wrote to Clarke, but in a very different way: 'If the

[1] Napoleon to Clarke, November 11, 1807.

orders which I gave you in my letter of yesterday,' he said, 'for the departure of the troops in station, have not been executed, I desire that you countermand them. . . . Circumstances have changed, and there is now much less need of haste.'

Thus, at the moment of falling upon his prey, Napoleon hesitated and drew back. What had caused him to alter his mind? The whole explanation of this sudden change is to be found in the fresh incidents which had just taken place at Madrid. The moral perplexity of a man who stops at the moment of acting had nothing whatever to do with it. The Prince of the Asturias, terrified at the possible consequences of the king's anger and the prospect of the criminal trial, had betrayed his accomplices, with the ingratitude common to men of his rank; at the same time he made disclosures which might have ruined him, but which in reality saved him. In denouncing the Duke de l'Infantado and Escoiquiz, he had related the interview of the latter with the French ambassador, the project that he had formed of asking a princess of the imperial blood in marriage, and the formal demand which by Beauharnais's advice he had addressed to Napoleon. Dismayed at unexpectedly finding the Emperor's hand in intrigues which no one thought he was connected with, the Prince of the Peace, who knew by terrible experience what it might cost him to wound Napoleon's pride, immediately resolved to hush up the affair and to stop the proceedings against the heir to the crown, in order to deprive the Emperor of all pretext for interference. But by an unfortunate inconsistency, while he pardoned the principal culprit, he persisted in prosecuting the accomplices, either because he felt that a general amnesty would be impossible after all the publicity that had been given to the conspiracy, or because he could not bring himself to lose this opportunity of striking his sworn enemies. He dictated two letters to Ferdinand, in which the young prince implored the pardon of his parents; both of these he published in a royal decree, by which the king declared that he had forgiven his son out of regard to his repentance and the prayers of the queen.

With regard to the other persons accused, they were all to be brought to trial. But the Marquis de Caballero, minister of justice, had orders to keep back everything in the proceedings that might compromise the French ambassador. Godoy had so great an interest in sparing Napoleon, under these critical circumstances he experienced so much terror at the mere idea of again incurring the anger of so dangerous an enemy, that it would be useless to look further for the secret of his readiness to put an end to the proceedings. Those who say that he was deterred by the outburst of public opinion forget first that this outburst was not displayed till much later, and secondly that the best means of justifying himself, after having commenced proceedings, was to continue them. Moreover, a despatch from Izquierdo a few days later confirmed him in his intentions. 'M. de Champagny had informed him,' he said, 'of the Emperor's commands, that on no pretext was anything to be published in this affair which might have any connection whatever either with the Emperor or with his ambassador. "And if Beauharnais is found guilty," asked Izquierdo, "is the action to be suspended to the scandal of the nation?" "Do not argue," replied Champagny; "such is the order of his Majesty. *You have only to obey.*"'—Despatch of the 17th of November.

This significant injunction proved to Manuel Godoy that he had judged rightly. He obeyed it scrupulously. In the proceedings instituted against Ferdinand's friends, Escoiquiz and the dukes de l'Infantado and San Carlos, there was not a single allusion to the part which the French ambassador had taken in these events. The judges displayed their sense of justice by refusing to condemn the accomplices when the principal culprit had been absolved; they acquitted them in spite of the heavy charges that were brought against them, in spite of the declared hostility of the king, in spite of the threats of a vindictive queen. The courageous conduct of these magistrates shows in a striking manner that, however low Spain had then sunk, examples of honour and civic virtue might still be found, such as we might seek for in vain in France during the reign of Napoleon.

In consequence of Godoy's skilful conduct the blow had failed, and the scheme was postponed. What was Napoleon going to do? If, as has so often been stated, he had been dissatisfied at seeing his ambassador take part in these intrigues, he would doubtless recall him and disavow his acts, as the king of Spain so urgently demanded. Nothing of the kind. He had more than ever need of his blind confidence and of his hatred of the Prince of the Peace. He left him at Madrid to pursue his work of discord, and he wrote a letter to the king of Spain to tranquillise him.

'Sir, my brother,' he wrote, 'I ought in truth to inform your Majesty, *that I have never received any letter from the Prince of the Asturias*, that neither directly nor indirectly *have I ever heard him spoken of*, so that I might truthfully say *I am in ignorance of his existence*.' Admirable generosity, say some, as if he had not an interest in saving the prince, as if it were not his best card to play! He goes on to speak of Portugal; all his thoughts are occupied by this expedition; it is the only important thing; it leaves him no time to enter into the household quarrels of his ally, and the king ought to think of pushing it on more vigorously. '*Palace disputes*, though doubtless very distressing to a feeling father, can have no influence over general affairs. . . . He hopes that his Majesty has found some consolation in the anxieties which beset him, for no one is more warmly attached to him than himself.'[1] He trusted this letter to his chamberlain, De Tournon, a discreet man, of a penetrating and observant mind. He gave him as his mission 'to find out on his way what was the opinion of the country on what had just taken place, if it was in favour of the Prince of the Asturias, or of the Prince of the Peace. *You will also ascertain*,' he continued, '*without appearing to do so, what is the state of the fortifications of Pampeluna and Fontarabia*. . . . You will obtain very exact information *about the Spanish army*, about the places that *they occupy at present*,' etc.[2]

The same day, the 13th of November, he decided upon

[1] Napoleon to the king of Spain, November 13, 1807.
[2] Napoleon to M. de Tournon, November 13.

an act far graver and more decisive than anything that he had hitherto done. He charged Clarke to order Dupont to cross the frontier with that second army which, according to the treaty signed a fortnight before, was not to enter Spain without the consent of the king.[1] He stopped the departure of the troops in station, for his plan was modified. Since Charles had pardoned his son, he could no longer interfere to release the oppressed prince; but he would allege the necessity of relieving the army of Portugal, which no one threatened. In the excited state of opinion, fresh events would speedily furnish him with the pretext that he needed. Ferdinand, whom Napoleon seemed to wish to defend against his father, whom he cleared of the accusation of corresponding with a foreigner, whom he encouraged through Beauharnais, would believe that he was upheld by him and inevitably think of revenge. If this expected incident did not happen, a hundred others might arise out of the mere presence of foreign troops on Spanish territory. He accordingly ordered Dupont to enter Spain, but not to go beyond Vittoria; from thence the general was to send officers in all directions to study the country.[2]

While this operation, apparently almost insignificant, in reality so formidable, was quietly being effected, Napoleon wished to appear to know nothing about it, or at any rate not to attach any importance to it. He therefore started for Italy, announcing his journey with great parade. He arranged to make his triumphal entry into Milan the very day that Dupont was stealthily to penetrate into Spain. How was it possible to believe that this man, wholly occupied in receiving festivities, ovations, and the acclamations of his good people of Italy, was preparing to deal a treacherous blow to the Spanish monarchy? If his troops violated the Spanish territory, it was doubtless through some mistake, some misunderstood order. The Spanish ambassador would necessarily defer his complaints till a more convenient opportunity; just then the Emperor was too far away and too much absorbed to listen to them. And during this time our troops continued to enter; they poured

[1] To Clarke the same day. [2] To Clarke.

into the Spanish provinces. Napoleon followed them with his eye; it was he who fixed their halting-places, though seemingly wholly engrossed with the affairs of Italy and the happiness of his peoples. Thanks to the distance, he was spared all importunate questions till he was ready to throw off the mask. This journey to Italy was in itself a stroke of genius. Napoleon's apologists, who see nothing more in it than his desire to indulge in family intercourse with his brothers Joseph and Lucien, and 'to embrace his beloved son,' Prince Eugène, have very little appreciation of a mind so fertile in contriving schemes. How can they so completely fail to recognise his genius? Napoleon publicly starting for Italy, just as his soldiers were invading Spain, is the same man as Napoleon shutting himself up in Malmaison at the time that the duke of Enghien was brought to Paris. It was Napoleon who remained in Italy when he believed that his fleets were assembling in the Channel to attack England; it was Napoleon who lingered at Boulogne while his army debouched from the valley of the Danube to attack Austria. This is the man to the life. We might bring forward a hundred other examples of the same kind. Never was a man more consistent, and those who substitute for his best conceived calculations either chance or motives of a foolish sentimentality, which he would have repudiated with contempt, strangely diminish the force and energy of his character. We protest, in the name of the hero himself, against the open-mouthed lyricism which spoils this masterpiece of knavery and calculation.

Junot, stimulated and harassed by Napoleon, who desired above all things to surprise and capture the Portuguese fleet, pursued his journey to Lisbon. His wearied soldiers were scarcely able to carry their arms. 'I will not have Junot's march delayed a single day under pretence of want of provisions,' wrote the Emperor; 'this excuse is only good for those who will do nothing. Twenty thousand men can live anywhere, even in the desert' (November 5). Junot, who for some time had been very harshly treated by Napoleon, and who saw in this expedition an opportunity of regaining his favour, resolved to obey these difficult orders at any

price. His troops were almost entirely composed of young soldiers, who for the most part had not yet reached the age required for military service, but had been drawn a year before the time. It was with these inexperienced youths, incapable of bearing long marches, that Junot was, according to Napoleon's calculations in thirty-five days, to traverse the country between Bayonne and Lisbon, over mountains and bad roads, across open deserts, and through a poor, hostile, half-savage population, without provisions, and without resources of any kind. He had entered Spain on the 17th of October, and had arrived at Salamanca at the beginning of November, having already left behind him a great number of stragglers. He set out again on the 12th of November, taking the route to Ciudad Rodrigo, and then through the desolate passes of Moraleja, plundering everything on his way to save his troops from dying of hunger, and abandoning on the road the soldiers that were attenuated by fatigue and privations, and who fell with the first stab of the knife of the inhabitants. At Alcantara he found some supplies, and was able to repose and recruit his men. On leaving Alcantara he took the right bank of the Tagus, but the road was steeper and worse than ever. This road, which passes over a number of abrupt spurs that run out from the mountains of Beira and slope down to the river, presented an almost uninterrupted series of ravines, which the heavy rains had rendered impassable by changing every stream into a torrent. These fresh obstacles did not stop Junot's march. The general's mind seemed bent on one object, that of reaching Lisbon, and he cared little about leaving his army by the way, provided that he himself arrived on the appointed day. He accordingly pursued his breathless course, followed by four or five thousand men that more resembled spectres than soldiers; their clothes in rags, their arms broken, their feet bleeding, without shoes, without artillery, without baggage, in the greatest confusion; and it was in this deplorable and ridiculous plight that he appeared before Lisbon on the morning of the 30th of November. He arrived there at the exact time that Napoleon had fixed; but if he had found in the

Portuguese army a handful of resolute men to attack his phantom legion, not one of our soldiers would have survived this mad march. Fortunately for Junot and for our troops, the prestige of the great army covered their weakness.[1]

Just as the heads of the column of the French troops appeared before Lisbon, the Portuguese fleet, which had been detained several days by contrary winds, set sail for Brazil, carrying away the regent, his mother, and all the royal family, and with them all the friends and servants who wished to share their fortune, in all from seven to eight thousand persons who went to seek a new country beyond the seas. The regent, a prince adored by his subjects for the goodness and the mildness of his administration, had not determined upon this painful exile without great anguish. He would willingly have spared the trial to so many inoffensive sufferers, who hardly knew by name the author of their troubles. Again he strove to appease Napoleon; he declared that he was ready to make all the concessions demanded, even those relative to the confiscation of property and the arrest of persons. All this was useless. His ambassador, Marialva, was not even allowed to put his foot on French territory.

One thing alone was required of him,—this was his kingdom. On the 27th of November, a cold and rainy day, he left the palace of Ajuda, surrounded by his family, in the midst of an excited crowd that saluted him with blessings and tears. By his side, a living image of misfortune, was the queen, his mother, who for a long time afflicted with insanity, and suddenly brought into the noise and tumult out of doors, looked wildly around her as if she were seeking an explanation of this scene of desolation. The embarkation took place in the midst of a gloomy sadness, under the protection of the English squadron commanded by Sir Sidney Smith. The fleet set sail just as our balls were about to reach it. These hundreds of innocent beings, whose only crime was that of having excited the cupidity of a pitiless conqueror, were going to brave a thousand dangers, to seek an uncertain and pre-

[1] General Foy: *Histoire des Guerres de la Péninsule.*

carious retreat beyond the seas, abandoning their property, their homes, their relatives, their friends, and most of them breaking up the sacred ties that bound them to their country. Never, since the Roman proscriptions, had the picture drawn by Tacitus appeared truer: *Mare exiliis plenum.* And the man who, in order to satisfy an inordinate desire, had reduced to this miserable condition such a number of unfortunate beings of whom he had never had to complain, was satisfied; he was tranquil; he was glorious; men called him Great!

Junot peaceably established himself at Lisbon, where he gradually rallied the rest of his army. He then took possession of the whole of Portugal without striking a blow, only leaving to the two auxiliary corps of Solana and Taranco the part of spectators. Of a restless but kind and generous disposition, Junot would have desired nothing better than to make the Portuguese insensibly forget the disasters of their country by his mild administration; but he had to carry out the orders of an inexorable master, who only believed in the rule of fear. Napoleon reproached him for his clemency, as if it had been treason. He was impatient to seize upon the spoils of this unfortunate and defenceless little people. 'The hope that you have conceived of commerce and prosperity,' wrote the Emperor to him, 'is a delusive dream, which lulls you into security. What commerce can you have in a country that is blockaded, and whose situation is so uncertain as that of Portugal?' It was therefore requisite to confiscate, to imprison, to exile, and to levy heavy contributions. He received orders to disarm and transport to France all the Portuguese troops, and with them all persons suspected of having preserved any attachment to the royal family.[1] Junot hoped these pitiless measures would end here, but Napoleon sent him a decree ready drawn up, and dated from Milan, which was about to complete the ruin and distress of the Portuguese people. This decree levied a fresh contribution on Portugal, amounting to a hundred million of francs, to *be used*, said Napoleon, *for the purchase of all property of what-*

[1] Napoleon to Junot, December 20.

ever kind belonging to private individuals.[1] After this decree, which represented all private estates as belonging of right to the Emperor of the French, it was superfluous to add that all the domains of the crown, of the princes, and of the nobles who had emigrated, were his property, as well as the public revenues. It naturally followed, also, that the Corps of Occupation would henceforth be maintained at the expense of the people whom they had to oppress, and would receive additional perquisites besides, amounting to the half of their pay (Art. 9). In consequence of this frightful spoliation, weighing upon a nation of three millions of souls, who were deprived at the same time of their colonies, their commerce, and the sources of their wealth, the kingdom was, as it were, destroyed at a single blow. But what in all this imperial and royal decree perhaps best expressed the spirit that pervaded our conquests, was a short article worded thus: 'After the 1st of December of the present year, *a bottle of wine will be given to each man in our army of Portugal*, independent of the regular rations *required* by our ordinances' (Art. 8). Historians have vied with each other in extolling the grandeur of these words: 'The house of Braganza has ceased to reign!' A pretentious and declamatory assertion, intended to cover a base and contemptible act. The bottle of wine is less epic, but it brings the truth before us. Napoleon always talked of glory, even in reference to exploits that were nothing more than acts of robbery, but he reckoned still more on the powerful spring of new heroism—cupidity and covetousness.

The Court of Spain, seeing the contempt that was manifested in Portugal for the clearest and most positive engagements, began to understand that some extraordinary surprise was preparing, of which their country might very possibly be the victim. They were therefore anxious to compel Napoleon to explain his intentions, and if possible to disarm him, by offering him a fresh pledge of their docility and their eagerness to satisfy him. In spite of the Emperor's denial in regard to the marriage demand of the Prince of the Asturias, there were a thousand in-

[1] Decree of December 23, 1807. Art. 1.

dubitable proofs that he had encouraged it, if he had not suggested it. They consequently resolved to renew the proposal, making it this time in the name of the crown and with all the usual formalities. King Charles wrote in the most flattering terms soliciting the alliance as a favour for his house. A short time after, he wrote a second letter, requesting the execution and publication of the Treaty of Fontainebleau, of which Junot was so regardless in Portugal. This twofold step was extremely skilful, for it deprived Napoleon of the shadow of a pretext for complaining of Spain. But the Court of Madrid was too feeble, too irresolute, and too much the dupe of fears as well as of hopes, to escape the snare. Napoleon, in evident embarrassment, took refuge in silence. It was exactly to escape demands of this kind that he had gone to Italy; but following his constant method of reserving all the chances that presented themselves, so as to choose the most advantageous, he wished to place himself in a position to accept the proposition of the king of Spain, if necessity required it. Among the various plans which he turned over in his mind, there was one on which he often dwelt; it was the idea of placing his brother Lucien upon the throne of Portugal, if Lucien would only consent to repudiate the wife for whom he had sacrificed the favour of the First Consul. Lucien had a daughter by his first marriage, who was of an age to settle, and Napoleon had for some time been thinking of having her married.[1] This daughter of Lucien might, if circumstances had rendered it necessary, be made the pledge of a new alliance between Napoleon and the house of Spain. In that case, the throne of Portugal for Lucien, and in all probability the cession to France of the Spanish provinces situated north of the Ebro, would become the price of the immense honour that the Bonapartes would have conferred upon the Bourbons.

Lucien's haughty and inflexible refusal to comply with his brother's demands soon caused this plan to be abandoned. It would, moreover, have been completely

[1] This is clear from a letter from Elisa to Lucien, dated June 20, 1807.

changed in the execution; for if it was easy to give the throne of Portugal to Lucien, the cession of the provinces of the Ebro to Napoleon would certainly have resulted in bringing affairs into the state in which we find them later. After an interview of some hours at Mantua, the two brothers separated, irritated and dissatisfied with each other.[1] Napoleon insisted on having, as he said, Lucien's daughter 'at his disposal,' and Lucien consented to send her to Paris. 'Lucien,' wrote Napoleon to Joseph, 'appeared to me to be struggling with a multitude of contrary sentiments, and not to have sufficient strength of character to make a decision. I have exhausted all the means in my power to induce him to employ his talents for me and for the country. If he intends to send me his daughter, she must start without delay, and he must give me a declaration that he places her entirely at my disposal, for there is not a moment to be lost, events are hurrying on, and *my destiny must be fulfilled*' (Dec. 17). Lucien's daughter did start for Paris; but Lucien persisted in refusing a crown which would have cost him his domestic happiness. It is clear that the girl was nothing more than the fancy and toy of a disordered imagination. Napoleon had given up his project of marriage before she reached Paris.

The Emperor quitted Italy, after having visited Milan, Venice, and Turin, all of which places gave him a magnificent reception. Wishing to work upon the patriotic feelings of the Italians, he officially adopted Eugène as his son, and named him as his successor to the crown of Italy. The people were bidden to rejoice over this ceremony, which was supposed to be the pledge of the future independence of the nation. In the meantime, he did not restore to them even the shadow of the Legislative Body, of which they had been deprived since 1805. He contented himself with substituting for it an assembly of clerks, instituted under the name of Consulting Senate. On his way he left various plans for public works. Many of these were schemes that were not serious, but merely intended to

[1] See the *Mémoires du roi Joseph.*

dazzle the imagination of the people; some, however, were for the improvement of roads, of canals, and especially of fortifications, an object which he never lost sight of. He voted several millions for the port of Venice, but it was no longer in his power to repair the ruins he had made. Venice was a dead town, and he who had destroyed life there was incapable of restoring it. The works which he commanded to be begun were never completed.[1] He gave orders for the creation of a commune on the uninhabited plateau of Mont Cenis, and promised all kinds of favours and exemption from taxes to the unfortunate beings who would consent to settle in it. A hospital, a barrack, a prison—these formed the centre of attraction to the future colony, which was to be placed on the same footing as communes of *more than five thousand inhabitants.*[2] In spite of the *fiat lux* of this almighty will, nature dared to disobey. The barrack is there, the prison is there, the hospital is there, but no one ever came to live on these inhospitable heights. Of the pompous decree of Napoleon not a trace is to be found, beyond a few small houses built to shelter the men that work on the roads.

Napoleon also dated from Milan a decree which greatly increased the distress caused by the Continental blockade, and which was a worthy appendage to the extravagant decree of Berlin. The excuse for this act was an order of the Admiralty, which was scarcely less arbitrary or less iniquitous than the measures of Napoleon himself. For these measures England had retaliated by adopting a system upon the seas almost as oppressive as that which he was carrying on upon the Continent. By this order of November 11, 1807, the British Cabinet had compelled all neutral vessels trading with France or with her allies to put in at an English port, and pay a fixed toll. This tyrannical tax might be enforced temporarily, but it was certain sooner or later to exasperate all powers that had any sense of their dignity and their interests, especially the United States, a

[1] Comte Sclopis: *La domination Française en Italie, de* 1800 *à* 1815.

[2] Decree of December 27, 1807. Articles 24 and 33.

proud young state that was not of a temper to bear such insults for any length of time. But Napoleon replied to this measure in a way that was calculated to turn against France all the discontent from which she might have derived advantage. To this clumsy provocation, which enraged those whom England had an interest in conciliating, in order to gain them to her cause, he retorted by an act a thousand times more foolish, by decreeing 'that every vessel, to whatever nation it might belong,' which had submitted to the right of search by the English, should by the mere fact be *denationalised*, and be declared a *lawful prize*. And the execution of this decree, which it was far easier to publish than to carry into effect, was left to his ships of war and his corsairs. This arrogant menace obliged him, in reality, to capture all the neutral vessels that remained in the world. But there was this great difference between England and himself: she *could* exercise her right of search, while he was incapable of carrying out his threats. This was not a political act; it was nothing more than a schoolboy declamation. Unhappily, it was not the less disastrous because it was ridiculous.

Napoleon had returned to Paris the 3d of January 1808. It was not till the 10th of January that he replied to the letter from the king of Spain of the 18th of November. He declared that he was as desirous as the king himself to strengthen the bonds between the two states, and *willingly consented* to the marriage of the Prince of the Asturias with a princess of France. But he was suddenly assailed by scruples respecting this prince, whose defender he had been at the time when his father had accused him. He no longer appeared to consider him as a slandered man; he asked to be enlightened. 'Your Majesty,' he said, 'must understand that no honourable man would like to ally himself with a *dishonoured son*, without being assured that he had regained the good graces of his father.' As if the step that the king had taken was not sufficient proof of this! With regard to the proposition to publish the Treaty of Fontainebleau, he rejected it as inopportune and premature. It would in reality have fettered him, for utter insensibility

to dishonour is incompatible with openness and publicity. It would, too, have enlightened the Spanish people, who throughout the course of the national crisis showed themselves so superior to their rulers in good sense and perspicacity.

Napoleon had avoided entering on the affairs of Rome during his sojourn in Italy, but he had long before desired to put an end to the opposition of the Pope. He took advantage of his return to Paris to complete the invasion of the Roman States, of which he had at different intervals occupied several provinces. On the 16th of January he sent orders to Generals Miollis and Lemarois, the one starting from Milan, the other from Naples, to combine their march in such a manner as to enter the Pontifical States together. Miollis, who was the real chief of the expedition, was to march upon Rome, '*under pretence of crossing the town on his road to Naples.*'[1] Once master of the town, he was to take possession of the castle of St. Angelo, render all possible honour to the Pope, but declare that his mission was to occupy Rome, *in order to arrest the brigands from the kingdom of Naples* who had taken refuge there. We see that with the weak as with the strong there was always the same want of openness in the imperial policy. The moment Miollis arrived at the gates of Rome, the ambassador Alquier was to give the Cardinal secretary of state a note in which all the grievances, real or imaginary, of the Emperor against the court of Rome were set forth. There were fresh complaints of the Neapolitan brigands *dripping with French blood*, of the agents of Queen Caroline, of the agents of England, *who were disturbing the tranquillity of Italy*, etc. Miollis, it declared, would not quit Rome *till this town was purged* of the enemies of France.[2] A paragraph written in cipher in the despatch contained these words dictated by Napoleon for the instruction of Alquier:

'It is the Emperor's intention by these steps to accustom the people of Rome and the French troops to live together,

[1] Napoleon to Prince Eugène, January 10, 1808.
[2] To Champagny, January 22.

in order that, should the court of Rome continue to pursue her mad course, *she may gradually cease to exist as a temporal power, without its being perceived.*' This ingenious plan was the same that Napoleon was employing in Spain. Miollis was to allege sometimes the necessity of marching upon Naples, sometimes that of protecting the rear of the Neapolitan army, which was contradictory, just as the generals who were daily entering Spain were to allege either an order to march upon Cadiz against the English, who were disembarking there, or that of covering the rear of the army of Portugal. Thanks to these stratagems, the preliminary movements were effected with astonishing facility; but it was counting too much on the stupidity of men to suppose that the two enterprises could be fully carried out *without their being perceived!* It was, moreover, supremely hazardous and impolitic to run counter to prejudices, to strike the Sovereign Pontiff at the same time that he was attacking a nation whose attachment to the Catholic Church amounted to fanaticism, to complicate a national war by a religious war, to add to the power of patriotic feeling the terrible force of religious passions. The man who did not see this danger, or who, having discovered it, could not put off the petty satisfaction of vengeance, never possessed true political genius.

Napoleon at that time so little suspected the gravity of these two enterprises, which were the rock upon which his fortune split, that he seemed impatient to create other quarrels, as if his activity had not sufficient aliment. The perseverance of Russia in claiming the execution of the promises of Tilsit relative to the principalities had irritated him to such a degree that he had almost decided to recommence war against that power. Just at that time, that is to say the 12th of January 1808, he ordered Champagny to put the following questions to Sebastiani: 'If the Russians are determined to keep Wallachia and Moldavia, is it the intention of the Porte *to make common cause with France in the war?*' What are her means?

His decree from Milan had again caused him to be on very bad terms with the United States. He had had all

their vessels seized that had submitted to the search of the English, and in order to avoid a rupture he was obliged to declare that these vessels were under provisional sequestration, instead of being considered lawful prize. Lastly, he continued his preparations for that great expedition against Sicily to which he attached so much importance; he proclaimed the island of Sardinia to be in a state of blockade, as an accomplice of England; he meditated an expedition to re-victual Corfu, another to punish the Dey of Algiers, a third for Martinique and Senegal. In short, he made more plans and projects in a few months than he would have been able to carry out in the course of a long reign.

CHAPTER XII

THE REVOLUTION AT ARANJUEZ—THE TREACHERY OF BAYONNE

(*January–May* 1808)

THE French troops, nevertheless, continued to enter Spain as if no frontier existed. Dupont was followed by Moncey, with thirty thousand men; Moncey, in his turn, by the division of the Eastern Pyrenees sent on from Perpignan to Pampeluna under Duhesme, though this route is not easily to be accounted for by any necessity of covering the army in Portugal. Simultaneously with these movements another division advanced from the other extremity of the Pyrenees, and marched from St. Jean-Pied-de-Port towards Pampeluna, commanded by Darmagnac.

'*Without appearing to do anything*,' wrote Napoleon, 'he will occupy both citadel and fortifications.'[1] Moncey was to push forward from Vittoria to Burgos, and to extend his forces over the country as much as possible, on the plea of causing it less distress. The total number of troops sent into Spain up to that period amounted to 80,000 men, without counting Junot's corps. But this was not sufficient to satisfy Napoleon, and he hastened the march towards the Pyrenees of several select corps and of his own guard commanded by Bessières. To supply by one stroke the gaps caused by their departure, without being obliged to bring back into France his army of occupation in Germany, he ordered a levy of the conscription in anticipation of 1809, as he had done in previous years, and the Senate

[1] Napoleon to Clarke, January 28, 1808.

passed the vote with its customary servility. He urged every one around him to arm. He insisted that Jérôme, in his small kingdom of Westphalia, should raise an army of 40,000 men from a population of two millions. 'I have 80,000 men under arms,' he wrote to him, 'and I have just raised 80,000 more' (January 30). A report of Champagny's, published in the *Moniteur* dated January 24, explains all these levies and these movements of troops by the necessity of defending the Peninsula against the intended landing of the English in the neighbourhood of Cadiz. A most laudable solicitude truly! if its value is to be tested by the number of soldiers it drew forth. Champagny's report ends by these significant words: 'The whole Peninsula deserves your Majesty's attention.'

But that unfortunate people to whom Napoleon extended this generous protection experienced ever-increasing difficulty in feeling grateful for it. However thoughtless by nature, or easily deceived, they soon found it impossible to doubt that he was preparing a most dangerous intrigue against Spain and its sovereign. The net with which they were encircled was daily being drawn tighter, and, not daring to break it, their only study was to avoid giving any cause of complaint to their powerful adversary, in the vain hope of making him retire rather than embarrass himself by openly acknowledging his plans. Nor was it without apparent reason that they considered resistance impossible. The Spanish army was dispersed; part was at Hamburg, part in Portugal, where Junot had orders to follow and keep it back; part along the southern coast where it had been sent at the demand of Napoleon to repel the pretended landing of the English. The remainder, thus reduced, would have been incapable of resisting even one of our *corps d'armée*. Moreover, how could they receive with arms in hand soldiers who presented themselves as allies and brothers? In such a position the best plan, in the opinion of the advisers to the court of Spain, was to wait until the Emperor's projects became more clear. Perhaps, after all, they were less sinister than was supposed. Could they allow themselves to think that he would be so treacherous

as to wish to dethrone a sovereign who had given him so many proofs of friendship and confidence? At all events, would there not always be time to take a decided step and fly to America, as the house of Braganza had done, after having called the nation to arms?

Orders were, therefore, issued to the captains-general of the different provinces, to give the most friendly reception to the French troops. But this was an opportunity not to be neglected by the latter, and they at once seized all the strong places and citadels within their reach. Darmagnac at Pampeluna, Duhesme at Monjuich and at Figueras, later Murat himself at St. Sebastian—for the most part acting against their own wishes, but obliged to follow their instructions—set on foot the most shameful schemes in order to obtain possession of those places which they would not have been able to take by force.

These acts, the meaning of which it was difficult to misunderstand, began to alarm the king, the queen, and the favourite. Napoleon had hitherto mingled so many marks of friendship with his most threatening measures, that doubt and hesitation seemed allowable to minds blinded by a foregone conclusion. Had he not recently sent the king and his favourite a present of fourteen magnificent horses selected from his own stables? But it was no longer possible to close their eyes to the conviction that these pledges of sympathy had only been so many snares; and it suited him that the court of Madrid should at length understand his designs, since it could no longer thwart them. It suited him that it should take alarm and thus save him the trouble of throwing off the mask and striking the last blow.

To the intimidation produced by the conduct of his troops he now added threatening language full of equivocation, and the affected obscurity of which was intended at the same time to betray latent irritation. In consequence of the letter in which Napoleon had shown so little desire to promote the union of an imperial princess to a *dishonoured son*, the poor king had refrained from recurring to the proposal. Napoleon now seemed to treat his silence as a

crime. 'Your Majesty,' he wrote to him on the 25th of February 1808, 'asked me for the hand of a French princess for the Prince of the Asturias. I answered on the 10th of January *that I consented to the proposal.* Your Majesty no longer speaks to me of this marriage: all this leaves many objects, most important for the interests of my people, in obscurity. I expect your friendship *to remove every doubt.*' At the same time that he strove to draw the king into this unseemly quarrel, he acted the part of an offended sovereign. He drove Izquierdo, the negotiator of the Fontainebleau treaty, out of Paris, but not until he had made Duroc and Talleyrand suggest to him the project of a new treaty—a genuine diplomatic scarecrow—imposing on Spain the cession of the Ebro provinces in exchange for Portugal and the hand of a French princess. This project, never seriously entertained for an instant, only aimed at bringing to a climax the trouble and perplexity of the court of Madrid. And it succeeded to perfection, for Izquierdo, who, during two months, had borne countless insults, and had seen with his own eyes the hostile preparations that were being made against his country, carried with him to Madrid the alarm and despair which filled his own heart. At the very moment of his arrival his opinions were confirmed by an act which intimated that all these preliminary measures were about to be carried into effect, and that, from mere projects, they would now become realities. This act was the appointment of Murat to the command-in-chief of the army in Spain.

Murat started with instructions that were almost purely military. Napoleon advised him to maintain his army in the most perfect order, carefully to establish a system of communication, and to occupy all the important posts he might leave in his rear, but he said nothing of the object of the expedition, preferring to impart the knowledge of his ulterior designs from day to day. Murat was desired to avoid all communication with the court of Spain until further orders, and to answer all questions from that quarter by silence. His instructions went no further. Napoleon, however, who needed a lieutenant in Spain whose zeal

might be stimulated by passions of a more enterprising character than those inspired by simple personal attachment, had done all that was necessary, without committing himself by any formal engagement to Murat, to allow his credulous brother-in-law to believe that the Emperor destined him for the Throne of Spain. This conviction had been fostered by half sentences and insinuations of double meaning, which Napoleon reserved to himself the right of explaining later in some unexpected manner. If he had not confided them to Murat, he had at least taken care to let them drop before confidants whom he knew to be incapable of keeping a secret. 'The time will come,' he wrote to Jérôme, on January 30, 'whilst allowing him to hope for the Grand Duchy of Berg, that Murat will be placed *elsewhere*.' This 'elsewhere' could evidently only be in Spain. Murat believed it in common with all the Emperor's intimate circle, and if, during his short lieutenancy, he displayed a depth of shrewdness and unscrupulous audacity, seemingly little in keeping with the faculties of his vain and heedless mind, it can only be attributed to the excitement, originating in ambition, which persuaded him that he was working for himself. Murat was deceived and mystified in this affair as thoroughly as the ambassador Beauharnais, whom he so pleasantly turned into ridicule with his intimate friends.

Murat entered Spain on the 1st of March, and established his head-quarters at Burgos. Thence, by a concentric movement, he slowly pushed his army on towards Madrid. Dupont advanced by Valladolid, Moncey by Aranda, in the hope of being the first to arrive at the summit of the mountains of Guadarrama which command Madrid. When Moncey should have issued from the Somo-Sierra Dupont was to advance, with the bulk of his force, to Segovia, or to St. Ildefonso, so as to be in a position to support him.[1] Junot received orders to assist this movement by marching on Elvas and Badajoz, where he was told to keep the corps of Solano in check. At the same time, Beauharnais was desired to notify to the Spanish

[1] Napoleon to Murat, March 6 and 9, 1808.

government the approaching arrival at Madrid of two French divisions *going to Cadiz*. He was to spread a report that Napoleon himself would soon pass through the same town for the purpose of *besieging Gibraltar, and going on to Africa*. Finally, he was also instructed to allay the fears of the partisans of the Prince of the Peace and of the Prince of the Asturias, and should either one or the other wish to come to Burgos to meet the Emperor on his passage, he was to encourage them to do so.[1]

By his letters of the 14th and 16th of March Napoleon gave Murat formal orders not only to approach Madrid, but to enter it. At the same time he was told to avoid, with the utmost care, any act of hostility, and to continue to give assurances of the most pacific character. 'Continue to hold peaceful language,' wrote Napoleon to him on the 16th. 'Reassure the king and the Prince of the Peace, the Prince of the Asturias, and the queen. *The principal object is to reach Madrid*, there to rest your troops and replenish your commissariat. Say that I shall soon arrive to arrange and settle affairs.' But, if the Emperor was desirous at all cost to avoid any collision with the Spanish people before he had made himself master of the kingdom, he was not the less anxious to frighten the court, in order to get rid of it. So well had he calculated the effects which might be expected from this most natural fear, that he had already provided for the possibility of their seeking refuge either at Seville or Cadiz. Should they take refuge at Seville, as that would only be a temporary expedient, Murat had orders to *leave them in peace*, and even to *show them kindness*,[2] so as not to increase their trouble and distress by this behaviour, which would so clearly be false and deceitful. Should they, on the other hand, go to Cadiz, that would be an open flight which would compromise them in the eyes of the nation, and Admiral Rosily, who occupied this port with some of our ships, had orders to arrest them in the act of embarkation, and thus prevent the secession of the Spanish Colonies,

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, March 9.
[2] Napoleon to Murat, March 23.

which would be the inevitable result of the king's flight to America.

In proportion to the advance of this unexampled invasion, this taking possession by force of arms of a friendly country, where the invaders presented themselves with professions of peace and fraternity, the public discontent, at first suppressed by uncertainty, surprise, and ignorance of passing events, gradually burst forth with a violence corresponding to the long torpor which had preceded it. The Spanish people, always intolerant of strangers, were indignant at the sight of unknown legions occupying their territory under pretext of making it respected. Still, as yet unsuspicious of the true object of these movements, they received our soldiers not only without distrust, but even sometimes with a welcome that bordered on enthusiasm. Their hatred and anger were directed against the favourite, who, according to popular opinion, had brought the French into Spain for the purpose of using them as instruments of his personal ambition. Some colour, too, was given to these conjectures by the fact that at the beginning of the invasion, in order to avert reproaches which might fairly have been showered upon him, and to quiet the public mind, Godoy, at all times shortsighted, had spread a rumour that the entrance of our troops was the result of a plan concerted between the Emperor and the King. These excuses of a man who had exhausted all plausible explanations had been believed seriously. Now, therefore, the public turned them against him, made him responsible for every new and startling event that occurred, and gave him credit for the most sinister intrigues against his master, against the heir to the throne, and against the nation itself. At the same time, with an inconsistency common to the multitude, they took pleasure in seeing signs unfavourable to his interest, in the well-known proofs of sympathy which Beauharnais lavished on the Prince of the Asturias. They loudly predicted that this intervention, brought about by the favourite, would end in his discomfiture and in the elevation of his victim. They already saw Napoleon extending his protecting hand over the head of Ferdinand, placing thereon the crown of

Spain, restored to its ancient splendour by a closer alliance with the powerful Emperor.

It was at this moment that vague but persistent rumours of the approaching departure of the royal family began to be circulated throughout Madrid. They were then at Aranjuez, a few leagues distant, and were, in fact, preparing to start for Andalusia. The advances of the French, Napoleon's behaviour, at one moment doubtful at the next threatening, and Murat's obstinate refusal to give any explanation, had at length opened Godoy's eyes. He now understood all.

Thanks to the assistance of the queen, he had succeeded in persuading the king to go to Seville, which, by its position, protected by a river and a mountain-chain, was safe from any sudden attack. There, too, they would find themselves within reach of the sea. They summoned troops to Aranjuez; sent orders to the army corps in Portugal to fall back on Andalusia; and finally began, with the utmost secrecy, to prepare for the journey. But the royal family had in its midst a vigilant informer in the person of the Prince of the Asturias, who, deceived by Beauharnais, and believing the French to be deliverers armed for his cause, looked on this departure as the ruin of his hopes. The project, divulged by him and by the Ministers to whom it was thought necessary to communicate it at the last moment, was soon known at Madrid, and there created an extraordinary sensation. The people saw in it the Lisbon scenes repeated, all the underhand intrigues with which popular imagination credited the favourite. In presence of the increasing excitement the king tried to deny the report by a proclamation, but he failed in restoring confidence. An incredulous and irritated mob, composed of men of every class, poured from Madrid and its neighbourhood into Aranjuez, to take upon itself the surveillance of the royal residence; and, should need be, to hinder the court from carrying out its designs. The spirit of distrust and of revolt spread even amongst the very soldiers, who took their full share in the guard established over the king and the favourite.

In such a state of things the slightest incident suffices to set all in a blaze. On the evening of the 17th of March a lady, carefully veiled and escorted by the guard of honour, was seen to leave the palace of the Prince of the Peace. A patrol, who was on the alert, interfered, and insisted on seeing the lady's face, when, in the altercation which ensued, a shot was fired by some unknown hand. At once, as if in answer to a signal, a furious mob ran to the spot. They besieged Godoy's palace, broke open the doors, fell upon the guards, and rushed into the interior with cries of vengeance and of death. Meantime, the object of their hatred had disappeared, but they stopped respectfully before the Princess of the Peace, whom they saluted as another of Godoy's victims. Then, turning to the furniture, paintings, and works of art, they broke and destroyed everything in the place, but retired without attacking the court, though they instituted a stricter surveillance than ever over it.

Overwhelmed with anxiety, the king, in dismay, thought only of saving him whom he called his friend. In the vain effort to appease the people, he withdrew from Godoy all his honours and official appointments. He even dismissed his brother Diego, who commanded the guards. The 18th of March passed over without any excitement. Godoy was supposed to be in safety, and it was hoped that the worst was over, when, towards ten o'clock on the morning of the 19th, a fearful tumult arose round the palace of the favourite. A report spread that he had been discovered and arrested, and the mob demanded impetuously that he should be delivered up to their fury. Pale and covered with blood, Godoy shortly afterwards did appear, and it was with difficulty that the Garde-du-Corps warded off the blows aimed at him from all sides. They succeeded, however, in conducting him to their quarters, fenced round by their horses, while the mob pursued him with their curses. The man whom a freak of fortune had first raised to such a pinnacle of greatness, and now cast bruised and bleeding on the floor of a dungeon, had been close at hand during the last thirty-six hours, at no distance

from those scenes which so widely differed from his previous experience. Not one cry of this multitude, thirsting for his blood, had been lost upon him. At the first sound, Godoy, aware of the conspiracy against him, had tried to escape by a secret door, but finding it guarded like all the other outlets, he fled to the top of his palace, and there, rolling himself up in some matting, concealed himself amongst the rafters of the roof. After remaining there for thirty-six hours without moving, his sufferings became unendurable, and he left his hiding-place, when a soldier of the guard recognised, and immediately arrested, him. The barracks to which the guards had transferred him not being considered safe, the king was still uneasy on his account; wishing, moreover, to calm the public mind, and to encourage the prisoner, he sent to him his son Ferdinand, now become the idol of the people. The Prince, with ill-concealed joy and an air of triumph, proceeded to the fallen favourite and promised him that his life should be spared. It is said that Godoy then showed, amidst all his misfortunes, a flash of pride, sufficient to prove that he was not void of courage. 'Are you already king, that you grant favours?' he asked his mortal enemy. 'No; but I soon shall be!' replied Ferdinand.

Well might he think it, considering the rapid march of events, and that same day a new turn of fortune seemed to justify his prediction. A carriage and six, destined for the favourite, whom the king desired at all hazards to remove from Aranjuez, having stopped at the door of the guards' barracks, was the signal for a renewal of greater disturbances than ever. The mob seized the horses, cut the traces, broke the carriage, and drove away the coachmen. At this news the king, wearied by this long struggle and frightened at the unpopularity which menaced even the throne, recalling, too, to his mind the most tragical scenes of the French Revolution, manifested the intention of abdicating in favour of his son. The queen, preoccupied solely by Godoy's danger, instantly accepted this last means of escape, from which no one present tried to dissuade her. The act of abdication was drawn up on the

spot, and at about seven o'clock in the evening it was published in Aranjuez. The people received it with a loud cry of joy, which was re-echoed in Madrid that same evening. On the following day Ferdinand the Seventh was proclaimed King amidst excitement almost amounting to delirium, but which was composed as much of hatred against the overthrown favourite as of enthusiasm for the new sovereign. The mob rushed into and sacked the houses of Godoy's relations and friends, trod his busts under foot, and triumphantly carried about the likenesses of the young prince, to whom they now attributed every virtue. Popular imagination generally throws down one idol, only to raise up another. It never stops to discriminate, and it adores or execrates in turn that individual who, for the moment, is in its eyes either a monster or a demigod.

While the people, stunned by their own clamour, thought only of applauding the preparations for this ephemeral reign, Murat was quietly descending the slopes of the Guadarrama. He was but one day's march from Madrid. The revolution which had occurred at Aranjuez had completely altered the state of affairs. On the one hand, the project of flight upon which he had calculated had not been carried out; on the other, he now found himself confronted by a young and popular king, instead of by one who was worn out and tottering. This position, so improbable in such a country, had not been foreseen by Napoleon. He had almost come to consider the flight of the court as an 'accomplished fact.' He was kept so well informed of everything by his agents that he expected it to take place at the exact moment fixed on by the court; but he awaited, with even greater curiosity, the effect it would produce at Madrid. In the same letter to Murat in which he foretold the departure of the king for Seville, he said: 'I suppose that I shall receive an account of *what happens at Madrid on the 17th and 18th of March.*'[1] The expected crisis certainly did commence during those two days, but it ended very differently from what he had hoped.

[1] Napoleon to Murat, March 23.

Though Murat had no special instructions for such an unforeseen complication of affairs, he had general instructions which clearly indicated the line he ought to adopt, and his ambition, raised of late to the highest pitch by the false hopes he had been allowed to entertain, pointed it out to him even more distinctly. 'Do your utmost to calm and reassure every one,' said Napoleon in all his letters to him. 'Keep an even balance between all parties. I wish to continue friendly to Spain, but still to be in a position to overcome resistance by force. Tell the Spaniards that I am coming, that I desire to serve their country, and send the princes to meet me at Burgos and Bayonne, if you find it possible.'[1] Whether the court were to take flight or not, all this advice betrayed the secret desire of appearing to the Spanish nation as a sovereign arbiter between the two parties then dividing it. The balance having now been violently upset in favour of one of these two parties, Murat acted thoroughly in accordance with the spirit of his instructions by endeavouring to restore it in favour of the other, without otherwise in any way prejudging the real issue of the dispute. But he went to work with a crafty cunning and a Machiavelism which ambition alone could have inspired in a mind like his, not usually remarkable for its power of calculation.

He was at the gates of Madrid when he received a message from the queen of Etruria, whom he had known in Italy, and who had taken refuge with her parents when Napoleon had driven her out of her kingdom. In this message, she besought his pity for the dethroned Sovereigns and for the Prince of the Peace. The queen, after recalling to Murat the friendship which bound them to Godoy, earnestly implored for him his powerful protection and begged him to come and visit the king at Aranjuez. Murat did not go, but he sent his aide-de-camp, Monthion. That officer saw the dethroned Sovereigns, and, in addition to their grief, alarm, and anxiety about Godoy, he also witnessed their implacable animosity against their son, whom they

[1] Napoleon's Letters to Murat, from the 8th to the 16th of March 1808.

accused of being the cause of all their woes. Monthion brought a letter back to Murat from the queen of Spain, full of the most humble petitions, and in which she said that he, with the Emperor, was their only hope of rescue. She appealed to his friendship and to his feelings of humanity. The Prince of the Peace had been thus cruelly persecuted solely on account of his attachment to France and to the Emperor. All she asked was to go and finish her days peaceably in a country that would suit the king's health and her own, with the king and with their only friend, who was likewise the friend of Murat (March 22).

It is singular that in the letters that were published much later by Napoleon in the *Moniteur* under the name of the Queen of Spain, but which it is well known were falsified, a number of passages should have been allowed to remain expressing, with the same simplicity, this desire of living in retirement,—passages little in accord with the regret arising from disappointed ambition attributed to her. 'Let the grand-duke induce the Emperor,' she said in another of these letters, 'to have a sufficient allowance made to the king my husband, to me, and to the Prince of the Peace, that will enable us all three to live together in some place suitable to our health, but free from command or intrigue.'[1] These certainly were not the sentiments of a queen aspiring to re-ascend her throne. But it suited Murat's policy as well as that of Napoleon that she should seem to feel a regret to which she was a stranger. Moreover, it was not difficult to induce her to feign it, by offering her an opportunity of revenge.

Murat, on receiving this information from his aide-de-camp, at once perceived the possibility of turning to account the great power which his character of protector conferred upon him, and he resolved to persuade the king to protest against his abdication. Although his renunciation of the throne had not been extracted from him by violence, it had at least been dictated by fear, and had been unaccompanied by any of the formalities usual on such occa-

[1] These letters of the queen of Spain were published in the *Moniteur* of February 5, 1810.

sions. Monthion, consequently, was sent back to Aranjuez on the 23d of March, and returned thence bearing with him a document antedated the 21st, in which the king declared that he had abdicated only 'in order to avoid greater misfortunes, and to obviate the necessity of shedding the blood of his subjects, which rendered the said act null and void.' Armed with this document, which he intended to keep secret until Napoleon had decided whether he would make use of it or not, yet determined, on the other hand, not to recognise Ferdinand until he received orders to do so, Murat, it may be seen, committed no one, but left matters as they were, adroitly reserving complete liberty of action to the Emperor. He had, in fact, merely adopted a measure which strengthened the position prescribed to him, although he had immeasurably improved it in respect to the projected arbitration; for, in consequence of this protest, instead of there now being one king in Spain there were only two pretenders to the Crown, each relying on a disputed title.

The violent passions then agitating Spain allowed little room for thought or reflection. Nor is it surprising that Murat's entry into Madrid, which took place on the 23d of March, was generally regarded as a support to the new reign. He had published a proclamation in which he held up to public indignation all those who tried to excite an *unjust and absurd distrust* of the French army. Every one knew, that, for a long time past, Beauharnais had been the adviser and decided partisan of the Prince of the Asturias. The Emperor, therefore, must be favourable to the prince. Was he not longing to see him married to one of his nieces? The French troops, consequently, could only help to consolidate his throne. The public did not look deeper, and our soldiers, received with open arms by the inhabitants of Madrid, were present next day at Ferdinand's entry into his capital. This reception gave rise to such an outburst of joy and affection, that it is difficult to comprehend how Murat, despite his giddiness, should have failed to observe, as others present did, the wild energy which characterised these demonstrations of the people.

In those times it took at least six or seven days to send communications from Madrid to Paris. Napoleon, therefore, did not receive, until the 27th of March, Murat's letter reporting the events which had taken place between the 18th and 20th, namely, the revolution at Aranjuez, Godoy's fall, and the king's abdication. Nor did he know of the protest until the 30th, for Murat had not got it himself until the 23d, and most probably forwarded it to the Emperor on the 24th. But, before he had cognisance of this act, which was of such importance to him, Napoleon, on receipt of the first news, traced out a line of conduct for Murat which, by anticipation, approved of all that he had done. 'I have received your letter of the 20th of March,' he wrote to him on the 27th. 'You must prevent any injury befalling the king, queen, or Prince of the Peace. *You must act as if the old king were still reigning, until the new king be recognised by me*, and on this point you must wait for my orders.' It would be impossible to define more precisely the general bearing of the policy which Murat had been following, guided by his own ambition as much as by his previous instructions. As to the intention which inspired Napoleon to assume this attitude of lofty impartiality between the two kings, it is revealed with the utmost clearness in the following letter, written by him on the same day, the 27th of March, to his brother Louis, king of Holland:

'. . . I have decided on placing a French prince upon the Spanish throne. The climate of Holland does not suit you. Moreover, Holland can never rise from its ruins. . . . Answer me categorically. If I make you king of Spain, will you accept it? Can I reckon upon you? . . . Confide this to no one, and speak on the subject of this letter to no person whatever; for a thing must be done, before one admits having ever thought of it.'

Napoleon's determination to dethrone the Spanish Bourbons, in order to substitute a prince of his own dynasty—a determination previously indicated by numberless unmistakable signs—is thus materially confirmed on the 27th of March, by a document of undeniable authenticity. At that moment Napoleon knew nothing of the protest made

by Charles the Fourth, for it did not reach him with Murat's despatch until the 30th of March, and the only sentiment it evoked was a more complete and explicit approval of the grand-duke of Berg's conduct: 'I have received your letters, *with those of the king of Spain*,' he writes to him. 'You have done well in not recognising the Prince of the Asturias. You must re-establish Charles the Fourth at the Escurial; treat him with the greatest respect, and declare that he governs in Spain, until I have recognised the revolution. *I suppose that the Prince of the Peace will pass through Bayonne.*' These last words, combined with the instructions which desired Murat to send the princes to Burgos, and a passage in a letter to Bessières of the same date, prove that Napoleon, without precisely ordering his lieutenant to send Godoy to him by main force, as well as the king and queen, yet omitted no opportunity of suggesting that he should take upon himself the responsibility of this bold step. By allowing him to see that he expected it, he gave him to understand that it was a matter of course: 'Protect the Prince of the Peace,' he wrote to Bessières. 'He is sent to France on purpose to be safe. And receive King Charles the Fourth and the queen with the utmost respect, should the grand-duke of Berg *bend their steps* in your direction.'

On the 27th of March, therefore, Napoleon had not only ordered and approved of all that Murat had hitherto done in Spain, but he had even gone much further, for he had already suggested what could not occur until later, and had disposed of the crown by offering it to his brother Louis. It is important to bear all these circumstances in mind if one wishes to judge impartially of a forgery which ranks amongst the most audacious on record in the mournful catalogue of historical deceptions, and which, at the same time, has been the most universally accepted. The document I allude to is a well-known letter of Napoleon's to Murat, dated the 30th March 1808. This letter was published for the first time by Las Cases, in the *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, and it was reproduced by Montholon, who affirms, as does Las Cases himself, that it was communicated to him personally by Napoleon. It breathes so

strongly the style and ideas of the Emperor, that it has deceived all historians, even those who could not avoid noticing how much it differs from all that Napoleon had written before and after this letter. The editors of his *Correspondance*, who were last in the field, and possessed the most trustworthy sources of investigation, although admitting the impossibility of finding either the original or the draft, or even an authentic copy of this document, do not hesitate, nevertheless, to place it under its date amongst the Emperor's letters, without caring for the interests of historical truth or the errors to which they expose the good faith of their readers.

This letter, written with the evident intention of casting all the responsibility of the events in Spain on Murat, is nothing but a long remonstrance in which Napoleon predicts to his brother-in-law, with a foresight which an historian does not hesitate to characterise as *supernatural*, all the difficulties that are certain to spring up around him. He bitterly complains of being dragged on and implicated by Murat's giddy haste: 'he fears that Murat is deceived and deceives himself as to the state of Spain. Murat ought not to imagine that he is attacking an unarmed nation; *the Spaniards are a young, energetic people*, who have all the courage and enthusiasm of men unexhausted by political passions. The aristocracy and the clergy are the masters of Spain. *They will raise levies en masse, which will perpetuate the war.* Spain has 100,000 men under arms; *distributed in different places, they will serve as a nucleus in each for a complete uprising of the monarchy.* . . . He can do much good to Spain; but what are the best means to adopt? Shall he go to Madrid? Shall he take upon himself the part of a great Protector by intervening between the father and the son? . . . Nothing must be hastened. It is necessary to be guided by events. . . . He disapproves of his having entered Madrid so precipitately; he ought to have halted ten leagues off. Murat must be careful not to bind him to an interview with Ferdinand, *unless he considers the state of affairs to be such as would justify Napoleon in recognising him as king of Spain.* He must so act that the

Spaniards may have no suspicion of the part Napoleon may take; but that will not be difficult, as *he knows nothing of it himself.*' Here follow the plans which the Emperor meditates for the *regeneration* of Spain and the improvement of her institutions. He then adds fresh advice as to the consideration with which Murat must treat all the inhabitants, particularly the nobles and the clergy, and specifies the promises which he ought to make to them. The letter ends by some military instructions which we shall examine with the others.

The most striking point at first sight in this long and verbose communication is the extreme difference of tone and language which distinguishes it from all the letters addressed by Napoleon to Murat before and after the 29th of March. The same hand and the same mind are doubtless recognisable in it, but compared with the others it is full of discord. It has neither their conciseness, their practical sobriety of thought, nor their swift, direct style, while everything in it betrays literary composition. Each subject is touched upon in solemn, pompous, generalising terms, recalling the long-winded confidential speeches of a tragedy. In the same degree that Napoleon is brief, precise, sharp, and imperious in his correspondence with Murat, is he here vague, prolix, and diffuse. Instead of treating him roughly, according to his custom whenever he had reason to find fault, he expresses his disapprobation in terms full of magnanimous moderation. Instead of addressing him in the second person, as he does in all his letters of this period, *without any exception*, he calls him, '*Imperial Highness*'; a singularity the more remarkable, because, for several years after Murat became king, he refused him the title of *Majesty*. Instead of telling him clearly what he wishes or does not wish, he treats him to a complete political essay on the past and the future of Spain, and gives him advice which he never intended should be followed; in short, he lays before him in the coolest manner a whole series of predictions, any one of which, had it but crossed his mind, would have been sufficient to make him change his plans from beginning to end.

But this general discrepancy, though apparent to a practised eye, is of no account beside the contradiction in details which this document presents, when compared with the orders and instructions, so remarkable for their clearness, which Napoleon wrote at the same period and to the same individual. That he should have concealed from Murat the offer he had just made to King Louis, and for this purpose assumed an indecision foreign to his character, need not surprise us. It is even possible to understand that he should speak to him of the Spanish people as young and energetic, and of the aristocracy and clergy as the two most powerful classes in Spain, although his whole conduct proved that he did not believe either in this energy or in this power, and although he reproached him at the same time with 'attaching too much importance to the opinion of the town of Madrid, and to the vagaries of the mob.'[1] The acts of a man, it must be remembered, are not invariably in harmony with his thoughts. But how is it possible to explain the inconceivable manner in which he here contradicts himself except by the supposition that he was momentarily suffering from mental alienation? In this pretended letter of March 29th he writes:—'*I do not approve of the line your Highness has adopted in taking possession of Madrid with such precipitation. The army should have been kept at ten leagues distant from Madrid.*' Yet Napoleon sent Murat on the 9th of March the order to take Madrid, and from that day forward had constantly renewed it.

Nor is this all, for, on the 9th of March, he desires him to enter the town, and, should it be necessary, *even to take it by main force*, so little was he possessed by those fears attributed to him in this apocryphal letter; if *war be kindled all will be lost.* He preferred pacific means, but he never shrank from employing force. 'In case the Spaniards are able to defend Madrid,' he writes to him, 'General Dupont must advance by St. Ildefonso to join you, and you must *then march to Madrid and attack it together*, should that be necessary.'

[1] Napoleon to Murat, April 9.

On the 14th of March he sends him the most precise military instructions, so as to leave no contingency unprovided for, and adds: 'The most useful plan will be to reach Madrid without hostilities, to encamp the troops there by divisions, in order to make them appear more numerous, etc.;' and on the 10th of March he again repeats: 'the essential point is to reach Madrid, there to rest the troops and to replenish the commissariat.' On the 19th of March he is still more urgent: '*I suppose you will receive this letter at Madrid, which I ardently desire to hear that my troops have entered peacefully.*'

This march of Murat's to Madrid had been so completely planned and arranged by Napoleon himself, that he knew long beforehand the number of halting-places and the precise day on which the entry would take place. On the 9th of March he had already desired Champagny to inform Beauharnais 'that on the 22d or 23d of March a French army of 50,000 men would enter Madrid;' and on the 23d of March, the day on which the troops were to appear at the gates of Madrid, he writes to Murat, '*I suppose that you arrived at Madrid to-day, or that you will arrive there to-morrow.*'

Henceforward he always speaks to him of this entry into the Spanish capital as an 'accomplished fact.' Nay, more; fearing that Murat might not have troops enough to suppress an insurrection, he orders Bessières also to advance by forced marches towards Madrid, with the Imperial Guard (March 26th), and we are asked to believe that this same man, writing on the 29th of March to Murat, whom he knew to be in possession of such positive and stringent orders, should yet speak to him of the entry to Madrid as an act which had taken place against his wish! An aberration of intellect which it is ventured, moreover, to attribute to a calculating mind like that of Napoleon!

The reproaches which he is supposed to have addressed to Murat on other points are equally inexplicable. 'The march you have prescribed for General Dupont is *too rapid*,' he again writes. Yet it was he who had minutely planned this same march in his instructions of the 14th of March,

and of the following days, in which he authorised him to bring the greater portion of Dupont's corps to Madrid; and his instructions in this respect are so decided, that, on the 27th of March, he recurs to them in the most formal terms: 'I can only repeat,—what *I have already written to you*,—to unite the corps of Moncey and of *Dupont at Madrid*.' As to the attitude he is to hold towards the auxiliaries of Solano, the contradiction between the fictitious orders and the true instructions, without being so flagrant, is none the less real: 'Let Solano pass by Badajoz,' says the supposed document . . . 'always keep at a distance from the Spanish corps; if *war were kindled all would be lost*.' These last words sufficiently indicate the spirit which dictated this posthumous advice; a desire to take credit after the event for a foresight which had never existed. Junot long before had received the order at all hazards to prevent Solano marching either to Cadiz or Madrid; while General Merle, in like manner, had been desired to detain at Burgos the Spanish corps that occupied Gallicia; and Murat's first duty was to support both one and the other. Equally impossible is it to reconcile the supposed letter with all those that preceded and followed it, in regard to the projected interview between Napoleon and Ferdinand. Finally, a conclusive argument for the rejection of the authenticity of this document is deducible from the letter addressed by Napoleon to Murat on the 9th of April, in which he says to him: 'I see by your letter of the 3d of April that you have received *my letter* of the 27th of March. *The one of the 30th*, and also Savary, who must have reached you, will have made my intentions still better known to you.' Of the letter of the 29th, so important, so long, so explicit, not a word is mentioned. Taking for granted that he could have thus so palpably contradicted himself, is it possible to admit that he would not make the slightest allusion to a despatch which ought to have upset all Murat's plans? Is it possible to admit that he would not only pass it by in absolute silence, but continue to give his lieutenant instructions wholly at variance with those contained in this despatch?

That these striking discrepancies should have escaped the observation of historians who had no means of studying Napoleon's *Correspondance*, or that they should detect in the too celebrated letter of the 29th of March a magnificent stroke of genius neutralised by Murat's imprudence and ambition, is an error easy to comprehend: but, that it should be given to us as authentic after having seen all the documents in dispute, cannot be permitted so long as good sense and discrimination have any right to prevail over credulity and infatuation. A passionate admirer of Napoleon's memory, our predecessor in this history, struck, like us, by the insoluble contradictions which this letter of the 29th of March presented to all those that preceded and followed it, discusses a certain number with visible perplexity, in a dissertation eminently remarkable for its ingenuity.[1] He here allows us to study the remarkable struggle between criticism and idolatry which is taking place in his mind. At one moment, after an argument full of eloquence, he is apparently approaching a definitive conclusion, when he stops short, not finding it possible to believe that Murat ever received such an extraordinary missive, nor willing to admit that Napoleon could have lied in stating that he had written it; he tries to extricate himself from the dilemma by the ingenious device of supposing that the despatch had indeed been written, but never had been sent. In his eyes it is merely an 'inconsistency, full of genius,' conceived in one of those moments when Napoleon 'appears to have been struck by a supernatural light.' An explanation, forsooth, which explains nothing, for the improbable and impossible circumstances concerning this letter do not consist in its having been sent, but in the fact that it could have been written: that a man in the enjoyment of his faculties could not only have contradicted himself in such serious matters, above all when addressing his most intimate confidants, but that he should have denied the clear, positive, repeated orders which he had dictated, or written with his own hand, during twenty consecutive days. This is the mystery! This the enigma! Admitting even that he

[1] Thiers, *Hist. du Consulat et de l'Empire*, vol. viii. Appendix.

was inconsistent and repented of his inconsistency, the theory is untenable, for, in such a case, this apocryphal document ought at least to bear the same stamp as those thousand counter-orders to be met with in Napoleon's correspondence; while, on the contrary, it does not contain one of those changes of tactics so habitual in him. It presupposes anterior instructions in the same sense, forms part of a continuous system, implies forethought for a whole series of political contingencies, of which there is no trace in the other documents; in a word, it has neither meaning, aim, nor motive, unless it can be regarded as a forgery composed for the purpose of deceiving history. The forger neither can be, nor has been, any other than Napoleon himself. 'But,' exclaims the author whom I have mentioned above, 'he had too much pride to act thus!' What strange blindness, after all the falsifications which this same author has himself been forced to record! Had Napoleon too much pride, when day by day, during fourteen years of his reign, he falsified the diplomatic documents in the *Moniteur*, the news from abroad, the debates in the Chambers, and even the reports of his administration? Had he too much pride when later, at St. Helena, he composed those six large volumes of Memoirs of which each line is a falsehood? Had he too much pride when, visited by those who he knew were eager to treasure up every word he uttered, he made use of them as sworn propagators of his false testimonies? Is it probable that so grand, so honest, so truthful a soul could debase himself so much as to invent one additional fiction? That Napoleon lied audaciously to his contemporaries every day and every hour of his reign, admits of no denial; but who, except a systematic detractor of his glory, could suppose it possible that he would ever have thought of lying to posterity?

I do not condescend to apologise to those who may consider that I have needlessly digressed, in entering on this close examination of one of the most remarkable historical forgeries that has obtained credence since that of the False Decretals. As so many volumes have been written about one battle, I may be allowed, on my part, to devote

a few pages to this victory, albeit somewhat less glorious, gained in the cause of truth and justice. Of the many disgraceful acts imputed to Napoleon, I have proved some to be undeniable, others I have classed as doubtful, and from others I have had no hesitation in completely clearing his memory. Here again I shall give utterance to my thoughts, without caring whether or not they may shock those minds which have for so long a period been nurtured on agreeable fictions; for it is their duty to learn how to accept the truth, not that of truth to accommodate itself to their feeble spirits. I have already declared that the letter of the 29th of March is a forgery; I now boldly assert that the forger is no other than Napoleon. If this sentence be confirmed, as there is every reason to believe it will be by the final judgment of the future, it will further be seen that there was even something in this obscure affair of Spain worse than the snares to which it gave rise—namely, that low cunning *à la Scapin*, by means of which Napoleon has partially succeeded, for half a century, in throwing the responsibility of the initiative and of the final event on that poor feather-pated Murat, who, in this instance, was only his instrument and his dupe.

So little was Napoleon actuated by this policy of temporising and delay, for which he liked to give himself credit later, that, in his opinion, on the contrary, the moment for action had arrived. Two circumstances point this out clearly: first, his departure for Bourdeaux, which he reached on the fourth of April; secondly, that of Savary for Madrid —of Savary, his confidant, and the man on whom he most relied for carrying out his designs. The instructions given by Napoleon to Savary having been, according to all probability, merely verbal, it is difficult to know their full tenor. But Savary's acts sufficiently indicate what they may have been. His mission was to induce Ferdinand to visit Bayonne. The account he gives of it in his *Mémoires* is nothing but an essay, transparently modelled on the apocryphal document which I have been discussing. His description, written in the most solemn language, is simply an amplification of the original which he attributes to

Napoleon, and the improbability of which is ludicrous. Everything he afterwards states concerning the part he played is a mere tissue of clumsy falsehoods, related with the placidity and open-heartedness of a most simple-minded spirit. To give an idea of the sincerity of this good apostle, it is sufficient to say that Savary does not hesitate to impute Ferdinand's journey to Bayonne to Murat's influence alone. If he, Savary, did accompany the young king in this fatal journey, it was only in order 'to take advantage of his post horses.' This accident alone made 'his carriages be found in company with those of the king.' In one word, he had as little to do with the affair as with that of the Duc d'Enghien. He, moreover, declared on his authority as eye-witness, that Napoleon never thought of dethroning the Bourbons until he had himself seen Ferdinand's incapacity at Bayonne, and until in some measure forced to it by the insurrection which broke out at Madrid when the king entered France.

It were puerile to undertake any serious refutation of such assertions. Napoleon's *Correspondance* offers the clearest proofs that, both before and after Savary's mission, and especially in everything relating to the journey of the two kings to Bayonne, Murat only carried out the wishes which Napoleon had frequently expressed to him. On the 5th of April he writes to him: 'I told you to make the old king come to the Escurial and *yet to make yourself his complete master;* to make the Prince of the Peace come to Bayonne. . . . As to the new king, you tell me that he is coming to Bayonne. *I think that cannot fail to be useful.*' From the moment of Savary's mission, Murat retired into the second rank, and left the management of the undertaking to Savary. He submitted with docility to the directions of a man familiar with the most secret wishes of his master. On the 9th of April 1808 Napoleon wrote to him: 'It is desirable that the Prince of the Asturias should be at Madrid, or *that he should come to meet me.* In the latter case, I shall expect him at Bayonne. It would be vexatious if he took a *third course.*' (That is to say: It would be vexatious if he escaped.) 'Savary *knows all my plans* and

must have informed you of my intentions. When one knows the end one ought to aim at, by aid of a little reflection the means easily present themselves.' On the following day, the 10th of April, when telling him of Reille's departure 'with instructions similar to those of Savary,' he adds: 'when the object I have in view, and *of which Savary* will have informed you, is attained, you may verbally announce and mention everywhere in conversation, that my intention is, not only to preserve the integrity of the provinces and the independence of the country, but also the privileges of all classes, and that I desire to see Spain happy, etc. Those who wish for a *liberal government* and the regeneration of Spain will find it in my system. . . . The grandees who desire the consideration and the honours that were denied them *in the past administration* will find them restored, etc.' This is the language of a future sovereign. At length Murat's letters informed him of Savary's arrival at Madrid, and the terms in which he expressed his satisfaction at the news prove the perfect accord that existed between these three men! 'I have heard with pleasure of Savary's arrival. *My instructions were thoroughly identical with what you wished to undertake*' (April 12).

Two days before Napoleon penned this letter, Ferdinand VII., seduced by the promises of which Savary was the bearer in the name of his sovereign, and in defiance of the advice of his own wisest counsellors, had started on his journey to meet the Emperor. He quitted Madrid on the 10th of April, leaving the administration of the kingdom to an upper Junta, which was entrusted with the government during his absence. Blindness of this description would be inexplicable, did we not know to what wild extremes a prolonged state of uncertainty can drive a mind in which fear, hope, and the love of rule, have been struggling for mastery. Ferdinand's position, besides, was such that, even when inclined to suspect, as he sometimes did, the intrigues with which he was in reality surrounded, it was at the same time most difficult to choose any course entirely free from inconvenience or even from danger. In view of the increas-

ing concentration of French troops at Madrid, he could not have remained there any longer without placing himself under Murat's control; for Murat was already master of the town, and had the tone and manners of a conqueror. On the other hand, to fly in order to seek a safer residence would only be a repetition of that conduct which had been treated as a crime in Charles IV., and which had led to his downfall. Moreover, such an act would cause an open rupture with the Emperor Napoleon. Should he foster unfriendly designs, this would afford him the only pretext he required for carrying them into effect; for neither Ferdinand nor his preceptor Escoiquiz—a wit full of classical recollections—could suppose for a moment that a great man and a hero who had reached such a pinnacle of glory and of power could so degrade himself as to rob a crown by means worthy only of cut-throat ruffians. No! this treachery, this snare, did not, and never could, cross his mind. At most he contemplated some territorial cession on the left bank of the Ebro in exchange for Portugal, such as Izquierdo had spoken of when he returned recently from a visit to Paris. Napoleon's heart would infallibly be touched by this magnanimous mark of confidence,—for is not such a result to be found in numberless tragedies?

Murat's attitude certainly was far from reassuring. Not only did he refuse to recognise the new king, but, while urging him to accede to Napoleon's wishes, he often treated him with cool contempt, as though he disdained any longer to wear the mask of dissimulation he had assumed. But why not have recourse to that upright Beauharnais, who had never altered his language, and who had advised Ferdinand to throw himself into Napoleon's arms? Must not the ambassador be better informed than the general? Even if he could not be relied upon, was not honest Savary still near? and was it not significant that he lavished upon Ferdinand those titles of King and Majesty refused to him by Murat, who with his military frankness declared 'that he came to Madrid to compliment the king in the name of the Emperor; that Napoleon only cared to ascertain whether Ferdinand's sentiments were as favourable to

France as those of King Charles, in which case he would instantly recognise him; that the best means of coming to a speedy decision on this point was an interview between the two sovereigns; that such an interview could now be easily managed, as Napoleon was on his way to Madrid, and the fact of the prince going to meet him would predispose him altogether in his favour.'[1]

In this manner the fatal journey was decided upon, despite the remonstrances of some few devoted servants who saw through the snare. Although no news of Napoleon's entry into Spain had been received, and although his brother the Infant Don Carlos had informed him positively that such entry had not taken place, Ferdinand believed that he would not have to go further than Burgos. He arrived in that town on the 12th of April. It was occupied by Bessières, who had orders from Savary, confirmed by Reille, to use force, if necessary, to make the young king continue his journey to Bayonne. Ferdinand showed signs of hesitation, but these were soon overcome by Savary's assurances. At Vittoria, however, he ascertained beyond doubt that Napoleon had not yet left Bourdeaux. This striking proof of the artifices and deception which had been set on foot to entice him out of his kingdom suddenly enlightened him. Sending for Savary he told him he had been deceived, but that he was determined not to go farther. So far as Burgos the people had received him with enthusiasm and excitement, although the journey was everywhere disapproved of. According, however, as he approached nearer to the frontier, only one voice was heard in condemnation of this silly resolution.

The common sense of the people quickly penetrated the meaning of those squadrons of cavalry which joined the royal cortège from every quarter, and closed it in on all sides, on pretext of serving as a royal escort. They understood the mystery of this skilful arrangement, and pressing round the king's carriage entreated him not to go

[1] Escoiquiz, *Des motifs qui ont engagé le roi Ferdinand à se rendre à Bayonne.* Cevallos, *Exposé des moyens employés pour usurper la couronne d'Espagne.*

farther. At Vittoria the popular excitement became so alarming that Savary, although provided with every means necessary to overcome resistance on the part of the king, and irritated beyond measure at his refusal to proceed, thought it wiser, nevertheless, to avoid collision, and to go himself to Napoleon, either to obtain new instructions or some fresh expedient wherewith to deceive his victim.

Surrounded as he was by Verdier's division and by Bessières' cavalry, Ferdinand felt the necessity of behaving cautiously towards Napoleon. But he wished at least to be reassured by some explanation from him. He wrote to him, therefore, on the day of his arrival at Vittoria, reminding him of all the proofs of docility and attachment he had given him since his elevation to the throne. He recalled to his mind the counter-order sent to the Spanish troops who were returning from Portugal, the sums lavishly expended on the French troops, notwithstanding the wretched state of the finances, their admission into the capital to the exclusion of the national army, and finally his own journey with that of the Infant Don Carlos. Silence, and a steady refusal to recognise Ferdinand, had been the only answer vouchsafed by Napoleon. Now that he had come so far as Vittoria, at the repeated request of Savary, who had assured him that Napoleon only 'desired to know if the new reign would bring about any change in the policy of the two states,' he implored his Majesty to put an end to the painful position to which his silence had reduced him.

Savary reached Bayonne almost simultaneously with his master, and brought back Napoleon's answer to Ferdinand: 'Brother, I have received your Royal Highness's letters,' wrote the Emperor to him. 'In the papers which you received from the king, your father, you must have seen proofs *of the interest which I have always felt for you.* You will permit me to speak to you on the present occasion with *frankness* and *sincerity*. I hoped, on my arrival at Madrid, to induce my illustrious friend to adopt some reforms necessary for his states. . . . The affairs in the North have delayed my journey; meantime the events in Aranjuez have taken place. I am no judge of what has

occurred, but what I do know is, that it is dangerous to accustom the people to shed blood, and to take justice into their own hands.' After this parade of good-will and of edifying maxims, Napoleon interceded for the Prince of the Peace, whose trial could not take place without dishonour to the queen. Further, he said: 'Your Royal Highness has no other rights to the crown of Spain but those transmitted to you by *your mother*,' words as insulting to Ferdinand as to his old parents. He then explained his wish to *talk* to Ferdinand, by the necessity of knowing whether the abdication of Charles had been voluntary or forced. 'I say it to your Royal Highness, to the Spaniards, and to the whole world, that if the abdication of King Charles was purely voluntary, if he was not driven to it by the insurrection of Aranjuez, I shall make no difficulty in accepting it, and *I shall acknowledge your Royal Highness as King of Spain*.'

After this oratorical flourish of precaution, which was perfidious on the part of the man who held in his pocket the protest dictated by his agents to King Charles, he comes to the affair of the marriage. He blames the prince for having made the proposal without his father's knowledge —'for,' said he, speaking with regret of this step, which he had himself made Beauharnais suggest to the young prince, 'every proceeding with a foreign sovereign on the part of a hereditary prince *is criminal*.' He expressed his willingness, however, to forget this crime, and again fostered the delusion in the unfortunate young man's mind by the following words, which he carefully suppressed when he saw fit to publish this document in the *Moniteur:* 'I consider the marriage of a French princess with your Royal Highness *conducive to the interests of my people*, and regard it especially as a circumstance that will attach me by new ties *to a house with which I have had every reason to be pleased since I came to the throne*.'

Napoleon's letter was dated the 16th of April. On the next day, the 17th, he wrote as follows to Bessières: 'You will find herein copy of a letter which Savary takes to the Prince of the Asturias. If the Prince of the Asturias comes

to Bayonne, all right. *If he return to Burgos, you must have him arrested and brought to Bayonne.*'[1]

Ferdinand was still at Vittoria, watched like a prisoner by our troops, under the eyes of a people who were trembling with uneasiness, and ready at all hazards to save their king. Even here warnings did not fail him. A former old minister, Don Marianos Luis Urquijo, who came forth from retirement to pay his respects to Ferdinand, shared the general alarm and the distress of the king's advisers. He conjured them in a touching address, full of the wisest and most prophetic forethought, to give up their foolish resolve. He reproached them with lowering the dignity of the monarchy by leading the king like a vassal, nay, almost as a suppliant, to a foreign sovereign without invitation, without preparation, or any of the customary formalities. He pointed out the snare laid for them, and unveiled the progress and ultimate enslavement consequent on Napoleon's policy of artifice, the object he was pursuing, and now on the point of attaining by a final act of roguery. And when the duke of l'Infantado exclaimed that he was calumniating a hero, he answered: 'You know nothing of heroes. Read Plutarch and you will see that the majority rose to greatness over heaps of slain!' This eloquent appeal of Urquijo, embodied at once in a letter that cannot be read without admiration,[2] was supported by Joseph de Hervas and the Duc de Mahon, who proposed a plan of escape to Bilbao by Mondragone. But their efforts failed, from the blind confidence of Escoiquiz, of Cevallos, of the dukes of San Carlos and l'Infantado, who had attained complete control over the king's mind. Napoleon's letter, from the ambiguity of certain passages, no doubt gave them cause for reflection. But the commentaries by which Savary accompanied it allayed their fears, and his promises of immediate recognition, with repeated assurances of his master's friendly sentiments, having removed all unpleasant impressions, it was decided that the king should pursue his journey. As he

[1] Napoleon to Bessières, April 17, 1808.

[2] Letter to Don Gregorio della Cuesta, dated April 13. Llorente, *Mémoires pour servir*, etc.

was about to enter his carriage, the people rose and cut the traces; nor could their excitement be subdued until Ferdinand showed himself to the populace, protested that he was going of his own accord, in the assurance of the Emperor Napoleon's friendship, and that he would shortly return.

Next day, the 20th of April, he and his suite crossed the small river which serves as a frontier between the two countries. The silence and solitude of the spot astonished him; for, it was here that stately interviews had taken place between the courts of Spain and France, and here that he expected to find Napoleon's messengers hastening to receive him. He thus continued his route to Bayonne without meeting any one but the three grandees of Spain whom he had sent to compliment Napoleon. In return for this mark of courtesy they brought him back a most sinister announcement direct from Napoleon's lips, for the Emperor had undisguisedly informed them that henceforward the Bourbons could not reign in Spain. This information began to open his eyes, and filled him with anxiety; but it was no longer possible to retrace his steps. He was now in his enemy's hands, and there was no hope but in trusting to his good pleasure.

On reaching the gates of Bayonne, his mind a prey to the most gloomy forebodings, he was received by Duroc and Berthier, who escorted him to a miserable-looking house selected for his residence. He had been there about an hour when Napoleon came to visit him. The Emperor, who was living at the Chateau de Marac, a short distance from the town, had come on horseback to welcome his guest. He embraced him with the utmost cordiality, conversed with him for a few moments on indifferent topics, and taking leave, invited him to dinner on that same day. Towards evening the court carriages conveyed Ferdinand and his suite to the Chateau de Marac, where the Emperor received him with every demonstration of friendship. This affectionate reception speedily obliterated the sad impressions of the day. True, it was observed that Napoleon gave Ferdinand no other title than that of Prince of the

Asturias; but as the recognition was to be preceded by a certain political understanding between the two sovereigns, no one took alarm. This feeling of security, however, was but of short duration. Almost immediately after dinner Napoleon dismissed his guests, retaining alone Canon Escoiquiz, to whom he had determined at once to communicate his intentions. Savary, on the other hand, who was to fulfil an analogous mission towards Ferdinand, was ordered to follow the prince to Bayonne.

Napoleon had at one glance seen through the canon's character, and had noted his naïve vanity, his taste for intrigue, his pretension to be considered a statesman and to manage state affairs. He now determined to dazzle and win him over, certain through him to be able to exercise as decided an influence over Ferdinand's mind as he looked forward to obtaining over that of the old king by means of the Prince of the Peace.

Left alone with Escoiquiz he assumed that familiar caressing tone which is always so seductive and unexpected in the mouth of a powerful and much-feared man. He treated him as a superior mind, as a statesman free from vulgar prejudice. First of all he communicated to him his intention of dethroning the Bourbons, and compensating Ferdinand by giving him the kingdom of Etruria. As to Spain, she would form an independent power; he did not wish to keep *even one village in it.* This overpowering revelation paralysed Escoiquiz with astonishment. Napoleon then recalling the scenes at Aranjuez pointed out the impossibility of his recognising an abdication that had been dictated by violence, laying stress on the defect in form and the positive protest which invalidated this renunciation, and when the good canon struggled hard to persuade him that it had been free and voluntary, Napoleon, throwing aside all oratorical precaution, in order to go straight to the point, suddenly exclaimed: 'Leave that alone, Canon! and tell me if I can lose sight of the fact that the interests of my empire and of my house require that the Bourbons should no longer reign in Spain? Even taking for granted that you are right in all you have said, I would answer you,

Bad policy!' He then commenced explaining all the reasons which made the absolute possession of Spain indispensable to his system. Henceforward he could under no circumstance rely on a prince of the House of Bourbon, even admitting that this prince should marry a princess of the Bonaparte family, for that would afford no serious guarantee. He was not the man to whom they could offer such castles in the air (*châteaux en Espagne*). There was but one sensible and reasonable course, and that was the dethronement of the Bourbons. He had resolved upon it since Tilsit, and it had the approbation of the emperor of Russia. The whole of Europe, and even Spain herself, would soon applaud it, for he was bringing a liberal constitution and thorough regeneration to the Spaniards. The *populace* would perhaps rise in some places, but he would have *religion and the monks* on his side, and the malcontents would soon be suppressed: 'Believe me,' he added, 'I have had experience of it. *Those countries where there are the greatest number of monks are easy to subdue.*'

With extraordinary volubility Napoleon displayed this pleasing picture to the eyes of one who, in spite of his sadness, was evidently flattered at being the chosen confidant of these grandiose plans. Meanwhile this singular personage enjoyed the effect which his powers of fascination were producing on his auditor. He completely overpowered Escoiquiz with his coaxing ways, laughing, gesticulating, walking about, at one moment pinching the ear of the good canon, at another resuming the attitude of the master of the world.

Whilst Napoleon was taking such pains to act this curious comedy in presence of Escoiquiz, Savary was acquitting himself of his mission to Ferdinand with far less trouble. He coolly informed the prince that the Emperor had resolved to substitute his own dynasty for that of the Bourbons, and that, in consequence, he must renounce the crown of Spain. It is unnecessary to say more about Savary than to observe that he held himself erect when transmitting this message to the unfortunate young man, whom by dint of falsehoods he had drawn on step by step to the

precipice. There are some men whose merit consists in knowing how to bear prosperity or misfortune. Of Savary it may be said that no one ever carried off treachery with more ease, coolness, and even pride, than this precious servant. It was easy to see that this was his element.[1]

On the next and following days Napoleon returned to his conversations with Escoiquiz. He again offered him for Ferdinand, in exchange for the renunciation of the Spanish throne, that kingdom of Etruria with which he had twice before trafficked, and each time with unvarying effrontery had deceived those who had been simple enough to accept compensation from the hand of the spoliator. This time Ferdinand's advisers resisted with an obstinacy that did them honour. But nothing more clearly betrays the blindness cast over them by their delusions than their supposing it would be possible to bring the Emperor round to a compromise by a persistent refusal on their part, so firmly convinced were they that he intended only to frighten them by demanding much in order to obtain a little.

Napoleon, impatient at the delays of what he himself called his *Bayonne tragedy*, soon perceived that in order to conquer Ferdinand's resistance the presence of the king and queen, but above all of the Prince of the Peace who guided both, had become absolutely necessary. Conformably to his repeated orders, Murat had at length succeeded in withdrawing Godoy from the hands of the Governmental Junta, although they released him most reluctantly, fearful of jeopardising the little popularity they still enjoyed. He at once sent him to Bayonne, which he reached on the 20th of April. The king and the queen quickly followed, having first, however, at Napoleon's particular request,[2]

[1] Savary resolutely asserts in his Memoirs that he did not take this step with Ferdinand until much later, and many writers, on his assurance, have treated this as a calumny. But the date of his proceedings is established *to a certainty* by two letters of M. de Cevallos, both written on the 27th of April 1808, one of which was published in the *Moniteur* (February 1810), and the other in the Memoirs of D'Azanza and O'Farrill.

[2] Napoleon to Murat, April 25.

published the protest in which Charles IV. retracted his abdication as having been forced upon him.

The old sovereigns arrived at Bayonne in a high state of irritation against their son, to whom they attributed all their misfortunes, and with a new-born aversion to that crown which could now be nothing else than a burden, since it had subjected them to such contempt and hatred on the part of their subjects. They were also rejoiced again to meet their friend Godoy, whom they had given up all hope of ever seeing. The latter, owing his life to Napoleon's intervention, and feeling moreover excessive fear of him, was inclined to do whatever he might please. Nothing could be more favourable to the realisation of Napoleon's projects, for it was easy to make use of the father to obtain the son's renunciation, and easier still to induce Charles IV. to give up a crown no longer of any value in his eyes. The consent of the Prince of the Peace was, therefore, the first point to be secured, and his connivance would not be difficult to gain in the state of depression into which he had fallen.

Napoleon acquainted him with his intention of punishing Ferdinand by forcing him to make an *amende honorable* to his parents—a certain means of flattering hearts in which one single passion, that of vengeance, still lingered. He then enumerated the rich compensations which would console them for the loss of a precarious sovereignty that would be odious if maintained by force, contemptible if obliged to yield to popular caprices.

Charles IV. and his queen made their entry into Bayonne on the 30th of April. Everywhere on their route Napoleon ordered royal honours to be shown to them, with a pomp and unusual ostentation which was all the more calculated to impress them now that they had met with a different reception from the Spanish people.

On alighting from his carriage, the old king, who was far too simple and good-natured to be capable of perceiving the dark plots by which he had been entangled, threw himself, with tears in his eyes, into the arms of the man who had just ruined his house, brought shame and rebellion into

the bosom of his family, and was about to put the whole of Spain to fire and sword. He pressed him to his heart and called him his friend and his support. Napoleon, with a smiling and serene countenance, accepted these signs of friendship, which, to any one of feeling or of honour, would have been more intolerable than curses. While this old man, whom, in return for his steady friendship, he had so basely deceived and ruined, thus overflowed with gratitude, and at the same moment, in an outburst of rage, repelled the embraces of his son, Napoleon occupied himself, like a consummate artist, in studying the physiognomy of the actors in this scene. Writing to Talleyrand the next day, May 1st, after a long interruption of their correspondence, he communicated to him his observations. 'King Charles,' he says, 'is an excellent man. I do not know whether it is his policy or the circumstances which give him the *air of a frank good man.* The queen has her heart and her history written on her face, that says enough. . . . The Prince of the Peace has the *look of a bull.* He is something like Daru. One may exonerate him from all imputation of deceit, *but we must throw a slight tint of contempt over him.*'

The portrait of the Prince of the Asturias was much less flattering. He was the only one of these different personages, it is true, who resisted his will. 'The Prince of the Asturias is very stupid, very malicious, and a great enemy to France.' No doubt Ferdinand VII. fully justified this unpleasant prognostic later; but even had he been gifted with better dispositions, he could scarcely have turned out differently, after entering life under such auspices. Napoleon then related that he had got the couriers of the unfortunate prince arrested, and that he had read with indignation the expression '*Maudits Francais*' in his letters. He was quite overcome by this horrible insult. When he added the shameless violation of private correspondence to his many other acts of treachery, he doubtless would have wished to find in his victim's confidential communications blessings lavished upon himself and upon his soldiers!

The aged sovereigns met their favourite with unbounded

joy. Godoy at once informed them of Napoleon's intentions. They had neither the power nor the desire to oppose them. They wished for nothing but the repose and security of private life. Moreover their hatred to and resentment against their son, to whom they attributed all their misfortunes, had daily increased, and they seized the proffered opportunity of revenging themselves upon him with an almost savage ardour. The old king made Ferdinand come to him in presence of Napoleon, of the queen, and of Godoy, and then, after having overwhelmed him with the most cutting reproaches, he summoned him to surrender to him the crown he had obtained by usurpation. The queen, joining her husband, poured forth invectives and curses. The prince, on his side, with impassive bearing, repelled the accusations in respectful but decided terms. But when he replied to their repeated and even menacing entreaties by a persistent refusal, the old king, who had almost lost the use of his limbs from rheumatism, made a tottering effort to rise, and brandished his cane over the head of the young man.

After this deplorable scene the question was discussed by letter. Ferdinand consented to restore the crown, but on condition that his renunciation should be made at Madrid, in presence of the assembled Cortes and in favour of Charles IV. alone. Charles rejected these conditions in a letter dictated by Napoleon, in which he stated 'that Spain could no longer be saved except by the Emperor' (May 2d). Two days later he signed a decree in virtue of which Murat was invested with all power in Spain, and received the title of Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom. Still Ferdinand held out, and it is impossible to say to what extremities Napoleon might have resorted in order to force compliance from his prisoner, had he not been spared further acts of violence by the important event which now occurred.

Towards four o'clock on the 5th of May one of Murat's aides-de-camp—come full speed from Madrid—brought Napoleon a summary account of the insurrection that had just broken out in the capital. The circumstances which

had accompanied and followed the entry of the French troops into Spain had so clear a meaning, so patent a character of fraud, of violence and of contempt for all the rights, and even for those innate susceptibilities which are usually respected in the most uneducated nations, that the irritation of the Spanish people against these hypocritical invaders, who brought them slavery in the name of fraternity, rapidly acquired the most alarming proportions. But Murat thought only of the throne which seemed within his grasp, and considered an insurrection as a happy accident which smoothed his road to it. Even Napoleon, far from dreading it, had been ardently desiring it ever since the princes had been within his power. He remembered the 13 Vendémiaire, the insurrection in Cairo, the old theme of his letters to Joseph. A good disturbance thoroughly crushed, and leaving behind it a lasting impression of terror, was in his eyes an excellent basis for a new rule, and the certain guarantee of durable tranquillity. As to a general uprising, an insurrection of a whole nation, he had never seen anything of the kind, and did not believe in such a phenomenon. Another of his opinions, not less erroneous, was that by holding Madrid he would hold all Spain. Judging of all countries by his prejudices in favour of centralisation, he had not the least idea of the force still preserved by the provincial institutions of Spain, nor of the patriotism which they developed. He had foreseen the crisis, had wished it, and, if need be, would have provoked it, but of its danger he had no suspicion. For this reason he had desired Murat to select good military positions, to encamp his troops as much as possible in divisions, and in the environs of the town, and in case of a disturbance to occupy only the heads of the streets, without bringing the troops into play.

The effervescence which so many successive surprises and humiliations had produced at Madrid had been aggravated to the highest pitch by Murat's insolent and despotic proceedings. An opportunity alone was needed to make it burst forth into open war, and this unexpectedly occurred. Before long it became known that Napoleon's lieutenant

was preparing to send the remaining members of the royal family to Bayonne,—the Infant Don Francesco, Ferdinand's youngest brother, Don Antonio his uncle, and the queen of Etruria with her children. The Supreme Junta, when Murat informed them of his intention, resolved at first to oppose him. But having none but contradictory instructions from Ferdinand—one moment enjoining resistance, the next submission, according as resentment or fear predominated in his mind—and as the troops at their disposal in Madrid numbered only 3000 men, they took fright and consented.

From early morn on the 2d of May the mob collected in the Palace square, whence these departures were about to take place. The queen of Etruria was the first to appear, and with her children entered the carriages, but she was little liked on account of her relations with Murat, and they allowed her to go without protest. There were still two carriages in the square, when a rumour was spread that the Infant Don Francesco was weeping and refused to leave. At this juncture one of Murat's aides-de-camp passed by on his way towards the palace, but the people attacked him, and his life was saved with great difficulty. Troops were then sent for at once, to disperse the crowd, and they fired on the unarmed mob, which separated with cries of vengeance in all directions. Isolated French soldiers were assassinated, though only a few, for Murat's troops had long been ready for combat. They occupied the principal outlets of the town and swept the streets with their artillery, thus making the struggle too unequal to last long. As soon as the ranks of the patriots were somewhat thinned, Murat drove in amongst them the cavalry of the Guard, the Polish lancers and the Mamelukes, who pursued the fugitives and cut them down on the very thresholds of their own houses. The Spanish troops remained in their quarters, and took no part in the fight, except one company of artillery, who gave up their battery to the people, and whose officers, Velarde and Daoiz, died the death of heroes for their country. This was the only point in which the insurrection was able to offer any resistance, and once the battery of

artillery was captured all was over. Our losses amounted to three or four hundred killed, and those of the insurgents to seven or eight hundred, so far as it is possible to calculate from the most contradictory accounts. The Junta at once intervened, and petitioned Murat for a general amnesty, which he promised in return for complete submission.

This promise of the French general restored order, and a large number of insurgents, relying on his word, had regained their homes, when they learned that the massacre had recommenced, this time without the pretext of an insurrection. Thinking, no doubt, that the lesson had not been sufficiently severe, Murat had caused many Spaniards who had returned to their occupations to be seized, and, in defiance of his plighted word, had a hundred shot without trial, affording a memorable example of the cold and calculating cruelty with which a thirst for power may inspire a man born with good and generous instincts. This time it was not repression, but the safety of his future kingdom which Murat had in view. He no longer acted as general but as king. He showed a truly royal soul, rising at one bound to the heights of a grand policy, leaving scruples to the petty spirits that are incapable of understanding reasons of state. He was creating titles to the crown of Spain which Napoleon could not disown without being untrue to himself, for never were the precepts of this master of Machiavelism applied with more vigour, fidelity, and appositeness.

But the blood which Murat had just shed was not destined to profit either the master or pupil. As regards Napoleon, the 2d of May may be said to have dealt a fatal blow to his power, so universal and profound was the execration it engendered in the heart of every Spaniard. To Murat it resulted in a cruel deception. One may believe that, in the depths of his heart, he felt some shame and remorse for having committed such atrocities, but how much more bitter must these feelings have become when he found himself robbed of their price! The same day upon which he had shot the Madrid patriots, Napoleon notified to him from Bayonne that he must for ever

renounce this much-coveted throne—this throne for which he had shed so much blood and even committed perjury. He was offered, it is true, rich compensation, but compensation which he almost looked upon as an injury in the fever of pride and ambition that had taken possession of his mind. 'I intend the king of Naples to reign at Madrid,' wrote Napoleon to him. 'I will give you the kingdom of Naples or that of Portugal. Answer me immediately what you think of this, for it must be settled at once' (May 2).

Before the reaction consequent on the rising and the butcheries at Madrid had begun to be felt throughout the kingdom, where it was destined to resound as a call to arms, Napoleon was justified in supposing that the happiest results would follow these events. They at once helped him to overcome Ferdinand's resistance, which hitherto he had been unable to subdue. King Charles, at the instigation of the Emperor, summoned his son once more to his presence, accused him of being the author of the insurrection at Madrid, threatened to make him responsible for it, and finally declared that now, more than ever, he had no other means left whereby to justify himself but that of renouncing the throne. And when the prince with downcast eyes remained obstinately silent and immovable, Napoleon menaced him in violent language. 'Unless, between this and midnight, you recognise your father as the legitimate king, and write in this sense to Madrid,' he said to him, 'you shall be treated as a rebel.' These are the words reported by the Emperor himself in his correspondence, but credible witnesses affirm that he threatened Ferdinand with death, and this assertion contains nothing improbable. Terrified at last, the prince yielded. He signed two successive renunciations, one dated the 6th of May, in favour of his father and in his capacity of actual king; the other dated the 10th, in favour of Napoleon, in his capacity of heir to the crown. King Charles had not waited for these two acts in order to cede to Napoleon all his rights to the crown of Spain and the Indies, in exchange for the châteaux of Compiegne and of Chambord,

and an income of thirty millions of reals (May 5). Ferdinand, in exchange for his rights, received the château of Navarre, with a revenue of 400,000 francs and a life-annuity of 600,000 francs. The three Infantas were assigned pensions. Napoleon thus acquired Spain and her colonies for a sum total of ten millions a year, but it was Spain herself which would have to pay the money! 'That will make in all ten millions,' wrote Napoleon to Mollien on the 9th of May. '*All these sums will be repaid by Spain.*' The history of this memorable transaction would be incomplete did we omit to add that in less than three months after the date of its signature, Ferdinand had to apply to the French treasury and entreat them to pay him the two first months of his pension.[1] That of King Charles was not better paid, and he did not receive his arrears of the month of July until September.

Napoleon was triumphant; radiant with joy. Henceforward who could contest *his rights?* Could stipulation or contract be more regularly concluded, or convention drawn up more in accordance with all requisite forms? One thing alone vexed him. King Charles seemed to reconcile himself very well to his share in the mishap; he was 'a good, excellent man,' but Ferdinand was gloomy and taciturn. 'As to the Prince of the Asturias,' he wrote to Talleyrand on the 6th of May, 'he is a man who inspires little interest. He is dull to that degree that I cannot extract a word from him. No matter what one says, he does not answer. Whether one chides him or pays him compliments, he never changes countenance. Those who see him may describe his character by one single word—*a sneak.*'

Napoleon could not conceive why Ferdinand did not evince more satisfaction. He almost expected him to show gratitude. What did this surly personage want? What else did he require? Had not everything been done according to rule? Ought he not to have understood that his sadness was insulting to the hero's joy? Napoleon

[1] See, in the Memoirs of King Joseph, Azanza's letter to Urquijo, dated August 18, 1808.

hastened to remove this melancholy face from his sight. He sent the prince and his brothers to Valençay, giving them an *escort of honour* of eighty *gendarmes*. With a flash of that cynical malicious irony which never abandoned him, he commissioned that grumbler Talleyrand to watch over their pleasures. 'I desire that the princes be received without outward show, but *respectably*,' he wrote to him on this subject; 'and that you do everything possible to amuse them. If you have a theatre at Valençay it will be as well to send for actors. You might bring Madame de Talleyrand there with four or five ladies. It would be no harm *if the Prince of the Asturias were to take a fancy to some pretty woman, especially if one can be certain of her.* I am particularly anxious that the Prince of the Asturias should make no false step. Therefore I wish him to be amused and occupied. Policy requires that he should be sent to Bitche, or *some strong place.* But, as he has thrown himself into my arms, has promised to do nothing without my order, and that everything in Spain is going on as I wish, I prefer sending him to a country place and *surrounding him with pleasure and surveillance.* If this can be made to last during the month of May and part of June, the affairs in Spain will have taken shape, and *I shall then see what course to take.* As for you, *your mission is honourable enough.* The reception of those illustrious personages, for the purpose of amusing them, is quite characteristic of the nation and of your high rank.'[1]

We are not told what feelings were roused in Talleyrand's mind by the perusal of a letter confiding to him this *honourable mission;* but these ignominious instructions indicate clearly that he could not decline it with impunity, and that if this statesman became from henceforth one of Napoleon's most deadly enemies, grievances were not wanting to him.

The Emperor knew that Talleyrand allowed himself to comment freely amongst his intimates on the subject of this glorious enterprise. The diplomatist boasted that he

[1] The editors of the *Correspondance* of Napoleon have taken care not to publish this characteristic document. We owe it to M. Thiers.

had discountenanced it, and declared it impolitic and dangerous. Well! whether he liked it or not, he should find himself compromised for ever by it, compromised by having played the most vexatious and dishonourable part in it, by having acted at the same time as jailer and intermediate agent to the dispossessed prince. And this is what Napoleon, revealing his grand soul to the pious Las Cases at St. Helena, called 'a sort of malice'! Charming malice, truly! one that worthily closes that long chain of infamy which terminated in the two treaties of Bayonne.[1]

Nothing now remained to be done but to take possession of this magnificent kingdom, which had been so cheaply acquired; for, though Spain was already inundated with our troops, we were still far from having occupied all its provinces. But Napoleon was convinced that this operation of taking possession of the country could present no difficulty, and that every one must, as a matter of course, be of the same opinion. 'I consider the most troublesome part of the business over,' he wrote on the 6th of May. 'There may be excitement now and then, *but the good lesson which has been given to the town of Madrid, together with the recent one at Burgos, must necessarily decide matters quickly.*' And on the 14th of May he wrote to Cambacérès: '*Opinion in Spain is taking the direction I desire. Tranquillity is everywhere re-established, and apparently will not be anywhere disturbed.*' Again, on the 16th, he tells Talleyrand: 'The affairs of Spain *are going on well* and will soon be *completely terminated.*'

Vain and pitiful illusion! No! The affairs of Spain were not terminated. They were about to begin! But were not appearances and probabilities altogether in his favour? Might he not believe—he, the master of so many empires—that he would easily subdue a nation without chiefs, without money, without an army, and separated by

[1] See and compare on this period the Memoirs of Cevallos, of Escoiquiz, Azanza, and O'Farrill, the documents published by Llorente, the *Mémoires historiques* of the Abbé de Pradt, the *Souvenirs diplomatiques* of Lord Holland, the History of the Comte de Toreno, the Memoirs of M. de Bausset. The Memoirs of the Prince of the Peace, though written under his eyes, contain little useful information.

the sea from every continental power except that one which oppressed it? Was it likely that a collection of townspeople and peasants could hold out against those legions that had conquered Europe? In this way everything combined to deceive him; everything, even to the unexampled inconceivable ease with which he had brought the preliminaries of his usurpation to a happy issue. His very successes only tended to hide from him all the more this snare of fortune. He had resolved to bring his armies into Spain; they had been received with open arms. He wished to make himself master of its strong places; they had been given up to him. He asked that the Spanish troops should be removed to a distance; they were at once sent away. He demanded the occupation of the capital; he had obtained it. He tried to attract the two kings to France; they had come. He summoned them to renounce the throne; they had abdicated. From the first moment every one submitted to him, bowed to his will, yielded to his tricks or to his violence. He had not met with one single obstacle, neither amongst men nor things, into such a state of decay, decrepitude, and exhaustion, had this old monarchy fallen. And now that he commanded one hundred and twenty thousand men within its frontiers, who would dare to speak of resistance? But it was precisely here that punishment awaited this invincible chief; for it was by means of this feeble adversary that Napoleon was to see himself seized and entwined by so strong, so firm a grasp, that nothing would be able to liberate him from it. Like the combatant in the ancient legend, he clove the trunk of this ancestral oak in two with the first blow of his powerful arm. But the disjointed parts suddenly drew together again, and his hand was caught in the living vice. He tried to free it, but the grasp grew tighter. The flesh and wood soon became like one, and the giant in distress shook the earth with his despairing efforts to release himself. Useless rage! The conquering tree holds him fast; enfolds its captive in a closer and closer embrace; night descends, and the wild beasts arrive and prowl around their prey.

CHAPTER XIII

THE INSURRECTION IN SPAIN—ARRIVAL OF KING JOSEPH

(*May–July* 1808)

When the news of the fusillades of the 2d of May circulated amongst a population that was already uneasy, agitated, and indignant at the presence of foreign troops in its territory, it produced a deep feeling of anger throughout the whole of Spain. But when the odious circumstances of the treachery at Bayonne, and of the two abdications which followed it, became known, there was but one general, instantaneous, and overpowering cry from one end of the Peninsula to the other, a cry of vengeance and of extermination, destined to resound unto future ages, and such as the world till then had never heard! It seemed as though some great volcanic commotion had uplifted the soil of Spain over its whole surface. In one day and in one hour, without concert and without watchword, the whole nation arose, animated by one common sentiment. These vast movements which carry along an entire people in one current of hatred, affection, or enthusiasm, were not new to Europe.

France had afforded this spectacle more than once during the many phases of its revolution, but there, as in all united and centralised kingdoms, it was at one time the capital, at another a few men who sprang up as dictators and willed and decided for the multitude. Then, with an enthusiasm and attachment that was often blind the multitude followed, leaving to them both thought and action. That which constitutes the originality and grandeur of this Spanish insurrection, and gives it its own special

place in history, is not only the circumstance that every province, every town, and even every village rose without the knowledge of the other, but that each man in some sort dared, in his own individual capacity, to confront the tyrant of the world at this hour of extreme peril, and to declare war against him on his own account. It is always easy, and ofttimes somewhat inglorious, to follow a movement that carries crowds along with it, but when a man, standing alone without living witnesses and influenced solely by honour, forms a resolve with intrepid courage, which exposes his life and fortune to certain destruction, those who relate such facts ought to bow before them with respect, for they present that rare and sublime phenomenon called heroism.

This example was given by thousands of men who, at one and the same moment, took up arms and ran to the small centre of their canton or their province. Would they be imitated or supported? They knew not. One thing only they knew—namely, that they preferred death to ignominious submission to a rule imposed upon them under such auspices. Noteworthy is it too that never in modern days had any conquest been accompanied by such revolting and hideous features. This invasion of Spain has a character of its own, even amongst Napoleon's undertakings, in which knavery always had so large a share. He had here surpassed himself; but, unluckily for him, he had also passed the bounds that could be tolerated by his contemporaries. Certain it is that no nation in Europe had yet sunk so low as patiently to submit to the baseness which roused the Spanish people. This it was of which this greatest of men had no idea. Far from having perceived any one of the premonitory symptoms of a great national convulsion, he felt secure, confident, and self-satisfied. By an ingenious arrangement he had spared Spain the horrors of a conquest by violence, and, without effusion of blood, had obtained the price of ten years' carnage. The whole world ought to be grateful to him for the subtle and salutary expedient he had chosen, and the Spaniards before long would bless him as their *regenerator*. His vision

penetrated no further. In this respect, the absence of all moral feeling, the profound ignorance of those sensitive points inherent to honour, patriotism, and individual or national dignity, which forms one of the distinctive traits of this perverse mind, amounted to a blank in his intellect. For his acts of treachery, although so laboriously arranged, completely defeated their own aims, his deep-laid schemes were gross blunders, his crime almost folly. Not to have suspected or not to have foreseen the effect that such base deeds would naturally produce on a proud and passionate people, betokens an aberration of judgment well-nigh incredible, and it is not difficult to imagine that Napoleon might have gone so far as to compose a forgery in the hope of saving his reputation for genius, even at the sacrifice of his honour. But in order to exonerate himself he should have written his whole correspondence anew; an omission which shows, no matter what may be said to the contrary, the most strange and inconceivable blindness, not only before the insurrection but long after it had broken out under his eyes.

The heroic and desperate resolution with which the news of the events at Bayonne inspired the Spaniards had all the suddenness of an explosion. Some days however were required for organisation. The outburst of feeling occurred between the 24th and the 30th of May, and almost everywhere under analogous circumstances. The signal did not originate in town or country; but was given on all points simultaneously. In the hamlets, in the villages, on the roads, men animated by one thought collected spontaneously. They marched together to the chief town or to the capital of the province. There they found the inhabitants in revolt or on the point of rising. They deposed the authorities who showed hesitation, or gave them cause for suspicion, appointed insurrectionary Juntas, seized arsenals, and armed the population after having passed decrees for levies *en masse*. Voluntary contributions flowed into the treasury of the new government, and every man capable of bearing arms enrolled himself under its banner. Nobles, peasants, citizens, monks, priests, soldiers,

all classes vied with each other in zeal and energy. Nothing is more false or untenable than the opinion of those who still persist in representing this insurrection as the '*work of the monks.*' This is the old theory invented by Napoleon for the purpose of casting dishonour on those whom he could not conquer; I shall soon show its origin and the small foundation upon which it rests. To the honour of the Spanish clergy it must be said, that far from evincing the ordinary complacency of the Catholic Church towards those whom it calls the established powers, they declared themselves energetically in favour of the national movement. But they did not lead it, they followed it, and, at the outset especially, fluctuations were more than once apparent in their conduct. Nor can it be forgotten that amongst those who were most eager to salute the ephemeral reign of Joseph at Bayonne, the representatives of the Holy Inquisition figured in the front rank.

Religious enthusiasm, no doubt, had its influence in the Spanish insurrection. This influence, moreover, increased when Napoleon, who had at first showered caresses upon them with the utmost care, finally perceived the uselessness of trying to win over the priests, when once he had declared war against the Pope, and broke with them in the hope of thereby gaining the adhesion of all who held philosophical opinions. But it is as untrue to attribute this revolt to religious fanaticism as it is to give the honour of it to monarchical fanaticism, which others have endeavoured to do. Its strength and its glory consist in its having united all sentiments and all opinions, from the superstition of the peasant to the almost republican patriotism of the university student. Side by side with battalions that were enrolled in the insurgent army under the banner of the Saints of Spain, were to be found the companies of *Brutus and Cato*, and the company of the *People*, with their device '*Liberty or Death.*'

This revolt was essentially a revolution of independence, and that it was which rendered it invincible. It will continue to be an everlasting lesson to nations whose national existence is menaced, by teaching them to prefer the most

terrible sufferings to the rule of strangers, even when presented to them under the disguise of apparent ameliorations.

In the midst of the extraordinary unanimity of this insurrection two classes of men alone seemed disposed, not only to ratify what had been done, but to accept a state of things which they looked upon as inevitable. Such were those who, at all times and in all countries, the most readily bend to circumstances, namely the officials and the courtiers. Still it must be said that their defection was not merely very partial, but very passing, for the immense majority of the former either remained faithful to the national cause or returned to it after a short period of hesitation; and as to the latter, being attached to the court, and not to the monarch, it was necessary to be as simple-minded as Joseph to wonder either at their eagerness or at their desertion. Besides, it must be admitted that good reasons for submitting to or accepting the new state of things were not wanting to either the one or the other, and they preached that resignation to their countrymen which seemed justified by the laws of necessity. What did they wish, or what did they hope for in organising resistance? Did they entertain the mad idea of conquering Napoleon's armies? No! such a delusion could not enter any sensible mind. The only possible result of the insurrection would be defeat, an irreparable defeat, because it would add the evils of anarchy to those of war. The ease with which the fall of the old dynasty had been brought about clearly indicated that it was an 'end fixed by Providence.' In accepting a new sovereign from Napoleon's hands, Spain in no way gave up her independence. She saw it more solidly founded than ever, and supported by all the strength of the empire. Freed from an incapable and worn-out dynasty, and governed by a prince whose personal qualities and enlightened mind were his credentials, Spain might at length participate in the reforms and improvements enjoyed by other nations, and resume the high place she had once held amongst the European powers.

All these advantages, of which they would almost

immediately reap the benefit, ought to make them forget irregularities that were certainly to be regretted, but had now passed into the domain of incontrovertible facts; and good citizens could now only have one thought, that of preventing irreparable misfortunes by a prompt adhesion to the new rule.[1]

These sophisms were specious. At first especially more than one sincere patriot allowed himself to be deceived, from the fear of seeing so many generous efforts end in the ruin or annihilation of Spain. But popular feeling never wavered for an instant, and in preferring death even to the promised happiness, its vision was more just and far-seeing than that of the wisest men. Whenever political calculations are at fault, the instincts of the simple-minded triumph; for heroism, like genius, is a matter of inspiration not of reason, and in all desperate cases a Joan of Arc will always be superior to a Machiavelli.

The principality of the Asturias was of all the Spanish provinces the first to declare itself, if one may ascribe the lead to any one in particular in a movement which was essentially simultaneous. This small country, hidden away in the extreme north, between the mountains and the sea, had been the last refuge of the warriors of Pelayo at the period of the Arab invasion. Its energy and patriotism rendered it worthy to serve as the cradle of a war of independence. On the 9th of May the Junta of the Asturias, assembled at Oviedo, decided amidst the acclamations of the entire population that it would disobey the orders of Murat; and its president, the Marquis de Santa Cruz, declared that 'wherever he saw a man rise against Napoleon, he would shoulder a musket and march beside him.'[2]

Towards midnight on the 24th of May the alarm sounded in the town and surrounding villages; they seized the commanding officers sent by Murat, and took possession

[1] These statements are in no way imaginary. They are the abridgment of those which the Extraordinary Junta of Bayonne and the Supreme Junta of Madrid addressed to their fellow citizens at the time.

[2] Toreno, *Hist. of the Spanish Revolution.*

by storm of the arsenal, which contained a depôt of a hundred thousand muskets. Next day the Junta met, organised the defence, and decreed a levy of 18,000 men. This done, the representatives of this country, so small as to be almost imperceptible on the map of Europe, animated by inexpressible enthusiasm, solemnly declared war against the oppressor of nations. A sublime act of folly, as worthy of the notice of history as that immortal inspiration which impelled Sparta's three hundred sons to confront a whole army! And in commencing this inconceivably unequal struggle, the Junta of the Asturias was so convinced that they were limited to their own resources, and acting entirely in their own private name, that, without waiting for or consulting any one, they forthwith despatched two deputies to England to ask for the assistance of the British forces. One of these was the Viscount de Matarosa, the same who, better known later as the Count de Toreno, has left us the most faithful and the most judicious description that has been published of these events. The envoys of the Junta landed at Falmouth during the night of the 6th of June 1808, and at 7 o'clock on the following morning they were admitted to the Admiralty. They brought Mr. Canning the declaration of war which the Junta of the Asturias had just made known to the Emperor of the French and King of Italy, and with it the request addressed to his Britannic Majesty. On reading this extraordinary message, Canning's keen intellect, supplying the information which was wholly wanting, at once perceived what a violent shock the Peninsula must have experienced to have produced such unheard-of events. He comprehended that emotion so vivid and profound could not be an isolated fact, and that this was only one episode of a vast conflagration. He promised the deputies the energetic support of Great Britain, and soon gave them an official assurance of this support in writing, and in the name of the Cabinet.

The moment the mountaineers of the Asturias sounded their war-cry, a similar cry answered them from Carthagena, at the other extremity of the Peninsula. These events were hastened by the popular desire to preserve to Spain a

squadron which Napoleon had ordered to Toulon under Admiral Salcedo. This shameful spoliation taking place in open day, as though it were a most lawful act, filled the inhabitants with anger and indignation; and the news of the abdications at Bayonne arriving at the same moment decided them to revolt. They knew that the squadron must first put into Mahon. Thither they would go to stop it. They rushed to the residence of the captain-general, deposed and replaced him by one of their own adherents, appointed an insurrectionary Junta, and opened their arsenals and depôts of arms to the neighbouring provinces. That done, they hurriedly sent a naval officer to Mahon to forbid Admiral Salcedo to quit that post or allow the squadron to escape its captors (22d and 23d of May). Murcia instantly imitated Carthagena. Another town on the same coast, the rich and populous Valencia, did not wait for the signal to rise. The reading of the abdications in the *Gazette de Madrid* sufficed to rouse the people, and in one hour the whole town resounded to the cry of 'Long live Ferdinand; death to the French!'

Unhappily the people did not confine themselves to words, as in the majority of towns with a large heterogeneous population the irritation of a multitude excited to frenzy produced lamentable scenes, in spite of the efforts of many courageous citizens to prevent them. The count of Cervellon having betrayed the insurrection whilst pretending to serve it, escaped a well-merited death through the devotion of his daughter, who tore the written proofs of his treachery from the hands of his accusers; but Baron d'Albalat,—innocent, though suspected,—was torn to pieces by a furious mob; a fresh instance of the mistakes made by those summary judges who condemn without discretion and strike blindly. Some days later the people of Valencia, under the influence of a fanatical priest, Canon Calvo, dishonoured their revolution by the massacre of the French residents in the citadel. But these assassinations were soon punished by the execution of Calvo and his partisans, and the town, ashamed of its excesses, effaced them before long by exploits that reinstated it in the eyes of the world.

These sanguinary scenes, which often are the inevitable results of the commencement of war, were far from common at the beginning of the insurrection; one may even maintain that they were exceptional, especially if the violence of the passions in play is to be taken into account.

French subjects established in Spain were almost everywhere protected against popular fury, notwithstanding the hatred of which they had become the objects. As to those officials who were attacked, though their punishment was both excessive and irregular, their adherence to Murat's government was very properly considered a crime. In several towns they were only deposed; in others they were simply enrolled in the insurrection. At Valladolid the captain-general of the kingdom of Leon resided, Don Gregorio della Cuesta, an old soldier and a good patriot, but of a haughty and obstinate character, accustomed to believe in military force alone, and considering resistance in consequence useless. The rebels, seeing that neither entreaties, arguments, nor threats, could induce the old general to join the insurrection, raised a gibbet in front of the balcony of his house, and summoned him to choose between death and taking command of the insurgent forces. This peremptory mode of reasoning put an end to Cuesta's scruples; he was either intimidated or more probably perceived that energy of this description might be used as a powerful instrument of deliverance.

The revolt of Gallicia had quickly followed that of the Asturias, the two provinces touching at many points. By this event the ports and arsenals of Ferrol and Corunna, for the possession of which Napoleon had long been labouring, fell into the hands of the insurgents. But the murder of the Captain-General Filangieri was here to be deplored, a man beloved for his amiability and uprightness.

The revolt of the province of Santander closely threatened to disturb our communications with the Pyrenees, which the rebellion of the kingdom of Aragon exploded at Saragossa; there the people chose a hero in the person of Don José Palafox. In short, Old Castile and Catalonia completed in a few days the insurrection of all the northern provinces;

the Basque provinces alone, being overrun with our soldiers in all directions, abstained from joining the movement. The whole of the South was already in flames. There, as elsewhere, the people had flown to arms, without having the slightest idea of what was going on in the rest of Spain. The insurrectionary Junta of Seville was so convinced that it stood alone and was acting for all, that it naïvely adopted the title of 'Supreme Junta of Spain and the Indies,' persuaded that it formed the last asylum of Spanish patriotism, and parodying in its own way the beautiful lines of the poet—

'Rome is no longer at Rome;
Where I am is Rome.'

This fine national impulse was unfortunately stained by the murder of Count del Aquila. Andalusia was the province which contained the greatest number of Spanish troops, thanks to Napoleon's precautions in having them sent to a distance from Madrid. There were a good many at Seville, more at Cadiz, and at the camp of St. Roque near Gibraltar. These arrangements, supposed to be preventive measures, had the effect of making Andalusia, which moreover possessed natural fortifications in the precipitous heights of the Sierra-Morena, the most formidable centre of the Spanish insurrection. The troops quartered at Seville having at once joined the rebellion, the Junta immediately sought to secure Cadiz, the best port in the Peninsula, and also the camp at St. Roque, where its largest army was stationed. The emissary despatched to Cadiz there met with unexpected obstacles. The captain-general of Cadiz was that same Solano who had made the campaign in Portugal as an ally of Junot. Discontented at first with the wretched part he played in that enterprise, but won over later by Murat's flatteries, Solano had resigned himself to the idea of accepting the new order of things. After doing all in his power to stop the movement, he finally, albeit with a bad grace, submitted to it on perceiving its irresistible force, and promised to obey the popular will.

But it was no longer in his power to dispel the distrust and resentment which his tergiversations had excited

amongst a people, of whom, only a few days ago, he had been the idol. He was seized and put to death in one of the squares at Cadiz, and died with a courage that would have done him honour if it had been shown in the service of his country. Don Thomas de Morla was appointed captain-general in his stead, and the Junta ordered him to attack the French fleet which had been blockaded in the port of Cadiz since the catastrophe of Trafalgar. He summoned Admiral Rosily, who commanded it, to surrender, and made the necessary preparations for bombarding the squadron in case of resistance. Rosily gained a few days by negotiations, then took up his position in the middle of the harbour, beyond the reach of fire from the town, convinced that he would soon be released by Dupont's corps selected to occupy Andalusia.

Jaen and Cordova promptly joined the movement at Seville. Granada with one accord armed all its able-bodied population, and carried along with them the Swiss troops under the command of Theodore Reding, at Malaga. At Badajoz, the capital of the Estramadura, the people waited, as in many other towns, for the feast of St. Ferdinand (May 30th). They then rose almost under the guns of the French who were occupying Elvas, a short distance off, and at once set about repairing the fortifications of the town, which were falling into ruin. In a brief period the Estremadura boasted an army of 20,000 men, which rendered eminent service by intercepting Junot's communication with the French army of Andalusia.

This rapid glance at the insurrection of Spain shows with what harmony and spontaneity this great commotion burst forth. It were as puerile to account for it by the influence of any particular class, or special superstition, either monarchical or religious, as to attribute the formation of the ocean to a small stream. It was not monarchical sentiment that was irritated against Napoleon, for he certainly was not bringing a Republic to Spain: nor was it religious sentiment, for, without taking into account the decline of religious thought which had occurred everywhere, even in Spain, consequent on the philosophical disputes of

the eighteenth century, Napoleon was still regarded by the Spanish clergy as the restorer of altars and the great supporter of Catholicism. As yet they knew nothing, or almost nothing, of his quarrels with the Pope. But what he had wounded and roused by irreparable insults were, first of all, those elementary sentiments of honour and of justice which every man bears in his own conscience, and next, that grand sentiment, alike individual and collective, which includes every other, and which is called patriotism.

During the development of this great national crisis, in which Spain was to acquire new vigour or to perish, Napoleon, still at Bayonne, strove to hasten, first, the arrival of his brother Joseph destined by him for the throne of Spain, next, that of the recalcitrant deputies who, willingly or unwillingly, were to offer the crown in the name of the people, and, finally, what he was pleased to call the *re-organisation* of a kingdom that no longer was his. He had signified his intentions to Joseph in a brief and peremptory letter that admitted of no objections: 'It is for you that I destine this crown,' he wrote to him, '. . . at Madrid you will be in France, Naples is the end of the world. I desire, therefore, that immediately on receipt of this letter you give the regency to whomsoever you like, the command of the troops to Marshal Jourdan, and then start for Bayonne. . . . You will receive this letter on the 19th, you will leave on the 20th, and you will be here on the 1st of June' (May 10). This imperious tone was purposely adopted on account of Joseph's known repugnance to leave a kingdom where he considered himself firmly established, and also on account of his facile and complaisant character. It is very probable, indeed, that during his journey to Italy, Napoleon may have spoken to Joseph of his elevation to the throne of Spain as a possible contingency. If he offered this crown to Louis later, he did so, according to all probability, in consequence of the little eagerness displayed for it by his elder brother. Certain it is, in any case, that Joseph quitted the kingdom of Naples most reluctantly, and left it, if not altogether inclined to disobey, at least little pleased with the change that was

imposed upon him and with a secret hope of escaping from it.[1] But Napoleon took every precaution beforehand that was necessary to force acceptance, more or less, upon Joseph, and that he should find himself pledged to it before he could have time for reflection. From the beginning of the month of May he had endeavoured to obtain a proclamation from the Supreme Junta of Madrid and the Council of Castile calling Joseph to the throne of Spain. The Emperor hoped thus to make the treachery of Bayonne seem an act of deference to the national wish. But these two assemblies, after allowing him to ask them over and over again, only sent him a most guarded answer. He then flattered himself that he would manage better by a phantom assembly of the Cortes. He convoked its members to Bayonne, like those Cisalpine deputies whom a few years before he had collected together at Lyons, and who came to secure the liberty of their country, and left again after having delivered it up to him.

This Extraordinary Junta, commissioned at the same time to give a king and a constitution to Spain, was convoked for the 15th of June. It was to contain representatives of the nobility, clergy, religious orders, universities, army, commerce, colonies, and even of the Inquisition. In reality it was composed, partly of those grandees of Spain who had accompanied the princes to Bayonne and had been detained in France by Napoleon, partly of those functionaries who were anxious to secure their position under every government, partly, in fine, of such individuals as a large supply of promises, threats, or flattery, is always certain to attract. It was to comprise one hundred and fifty deputies, but little more than half that number came.

This solemn parody of the forms and principles of national sovereignty was to be only the prelude to Napoleon's combinations. In devoting himself to the regeneration of Spain he had above all in view the appropriation of its resources. This was what he had done in every country the prosperity of which he had taken in hand; exactly

[1] See Miot de Melito, who rather disagrees on this point with the *Souvenirs* of Stanislas Girardin and the *Memoirs* of King Joseph.

what he had recently done in unhappy Portugal, and one must not attribute a beneficent or civilising motive to plans that were solely inspired by the covetousness of an ambitious spirit. The feverish impatience with which Napoleon occupied himself about the finances, the navy, and especially the Spanish colonies, was altogether due to the illusion which led him to suppose he would find enormous resources such as might enable him to carry out his projects throughout the rest of the world. It were an insult to our readers if we represented this as a noble and generous desire to make the usurpation be forgotten by an accumulation of benefits. Truly, if he had been capable of such virtuous feelings, it was not the opportunity of exercising them which ever failed him. Amongst the nations which he held down beneath his rod of iron, he would have had no difficulty of choice, had he wished to make this species of philanthropic atonement. But unluckily every page of his correspondence is there to prove that in occupying Spain he thought only of himself.

At first he was dazzled by the idea that he was about to put his hand on so many rich possessions. He calculated the number of piastres which Mexico would bring him in, and despatched messengers to the Spanish colonies in all directions with the romance of the Bayonne abdication, arranged in such a manner as to prevent a rupture. He counted the vessels on his fingers, and the formidable support which the Spanish navy and the numberless ports of the Peninsula would afford to his squadrons. Before the end of September 1808 he intended to have thirty-five war vessels. These thirty-five ships added to the forty-two he already possessed, and to the fifty-four which he levied from the allied powers and even from Russia, would constitute a total armament of 131 vessels of war.[1] This thought excited his imagination, and he readily exclaimed, as at Boulogne, 'England is mine!' He wrote six letters in one day to poor Décrès, descanting upon the magnificent plans he had in contemplation. But, at the very hour that he was developing these fantastic views, which never existed

[1] Napoleon to Décrès, May 28, 1808.

except on paper, and which by a singular freak have been honoured by the name of reorganisation of the Spanish navy, all the ports of the Peninsula were in the hands of the insurgents. To give an idea of the little advantage which Spain was to derive from this impulse to her maritime resources, it is enough to say that he destined all these armaments for a gigantic expedition, either against Egypt and the Indies, or against Algiers, or, in fine, against Sicily in order to avenge the check there experienced by Ganteaume, who failed even before his operations had commenced.[1] The most certain advantage which the Spanish squadrons could have derived from his solicitous care would have been, had they been led again to a second Trafalgar.

The meaning of the *reorganisation* which Napoleon contemplated in the Spanish army is even more clear than that of his intended improvements in the navy. It consisted simply in making the few troops that remained to Spain march off to France. He proposed to send them on later to the North, 'so as to let them share the glory of Romana's corps'; a glory that consisted in dying of cold and *ennui* on the shores of the Baltic. Finally, as to the finances: when he had well ascertained that the Spanish treasury had not a dollar left, he contrived the ingenious device of making the bank of France lend Spain twenty-five millions on the security of its crown diamonds.[2] Nay, more: it must be noted that if he destined a part of this money for the navy, in order to press forward naval constructions, by far the larger portion was to serve for payment of his brother Joseph's installation expenses. Is it not, therefore, mere mockery to represent such acts as a conception of genius, which if it could have been carried into effect would have secured the grandeur and happiness of the Spanish people?

In truth, these were but very visionary castles in the air (*châteaux en Espagne*), which would vanish at a touch. But he who constructed them was so infatuated by success, that he was convinced no enterprise, whether good or bad, could fail from the mere fact of his having undertaken it.

[1] Napoleon to Décrès, 26, 28, 29 May 1808.
[2] Napoleon to Murat, May 28; to Mollien, June 3, 1808.

The unexampled facility with which his new conquest had been achieved had raised to a degree of intoxication this power of imagination, which at all times had formed the strength and weakness of his genius, but which he better managed to control at the beginning of his career. He no longer doubted anything. He was now and for ever the legitimate and definite master of the magnificent monarchy of Charles V., upon which the sun never sets. He was, as the *Moniteur* certified, '*invested with all the rights of the house of Spain.*'[1] The heir of so many kings no doubt existed somewhere, but reduced to a kind of mendicancy, and in such a miserable plight that Napoleon turned away in disgust. Will it be believed? This poor wretch still remembered that only a month ago he called himself king of Spain! Of all his titles he had retained but an inoffensive formula, the only remnant of so much splendour, and he ventured to use it in the trembling supplications which he addressed to the all-powerful Emperor. Napoleon was outraged by the audacity and impropriety of this Lazarus of royalty. 'My cousin, Prince Ferdinand,' he writes to Talleyrand, 'when writing to me, *calls me his cousin.* Try to make Monsieur de San Carlos understand *that this is ridiculous*, and that he ought *simply to call me Sire.*' Does not this equal the 'Call me simply Monseigneur,' of the regicide Cambacérès? The sovereign of these vast states is he himself and no other, and it must not be supposed that there ever has been another. And he sends his orders to his subjects, like a king by right of birth, with the perfect certainty of being obeyed. He orders some to the Cortes of Bayonne where he requires their adhesion, he distributes to others governorships in the colonies, he sends to Gregorio della Cuesta his appointment as viceroy of Mexico. But the Cortes do not come, the colonies refuse to acknowledge him, and on the very day that Napoleon despatches his commission as viceroy of Mexico (May 26), Gregorio della Cuesta accepts the command of the insurgent forces of Leon and Valladolid. Truly the Emperor so far is only the sovereign of an imaginary kingdom.

[1] *Moniteur* of May 16, 1808.

Napoleon's imperturbable confidence, which almost approached somnambulism, extended also to the military operations, and even the most important news of the formidable insurrection which had broken out failed to disturb it. The Emperor not only was blind to its approach, but when it did break out he had no idea of its force nor of its extent. Murat having manifested apprehension from the beginning, and shown some slight symptoms of tranquillising the population by kind treatment, Napoleon reproached him with weakness, and advised him 'to bring his intellect to the aid of his strength of mind' (May 17). What did Murat fear? Was not every measure of precaution taken? Nothing serious was anywhere to be dreaded?

It was the same story in Portugal, whence Napoleon borrowed four thousand men from Junot to send them to Dupont, whom he then despatched to Andalusia and Cadiz. What could Junot be afraid of? '*The English are not ready to make any attempt, for they know well that they will be crushed.*'[1] Thus he wrote when Sir Arthur Wellesley was on the eve of effecting his landing. Had not Junot still a corps of 8000 Spaniards, besides his own troops? It never crossed his mind that these Spaniards might think of revolting. As to Dupont, he gave him only 9000 soldiers wherewith to invade Andalusia and to occupy Cadiz. But, had he not also 8000 Swiss who were in the service of Spain, and on whose fidelity he could equally rely?

All these military arrangements were thus built on suppositions, and when the revolt reached that point which required vigorous and decided action, his illusions, far from vanishing, changed into a blindness of which history offers but few examples. He committed a primary fault in obstinately directing the operations from a distance, and without quitting Bayonne; a mania for which he had himself severely blamed the directors and the committees of the Convention. He committed a second in dividing his forces contrary to his own principles, instead of uniting them in order to strike boldly. If we are to credit his

[1] Napoleon to Berthier, May 18.

own estimate,[1] Napoleon had at that moment in the Peninsula an army of 110 or 120,000 men, independently of those in Portugal. This, though insufficient to subdue a nation rendered fanatical by hatred of the foreigner, was sufficient to occupy good defensive positions even in the centre of the country, and to defeat every insurrectionary army which might venture into the plain, until the arrival of reinforcements would permit them to undertake more. But such aims were too humble for Napoleon. He resolved to crush the revolt at the same moment in every locality where it had broken out. He sent forth his troops in various directions, taking the precaution, it is true, of supporting these detachments by corps of lesser importance, which were to rejoin them in case of necessity, but without foreseeing the possibility of these corps being unable to effect their junction, as more frequently occurred. Thus, when ordering Marshal Moncey to march on Valencia, he detached General Chabran from Barcelona to take up a position at an intermediate point between Barcelona and Valencia. These tactics were adopted throughout. A detachment sent by Junot and the Vedel division were to support from a distance Dupont's movement upon Andalusia.[2] The Sabatier brigade was to help from afar the expedition of Merle against Santander,[3] and of Verdier against Logrono. Finally, he despatched a small corps of three or four thousand men from Madrid, to reinforce if necessary the ten thousand men whom he had sent against Saragossa under the orders of Lefebvre-Desnoettes.[4]

The same obstinate determination to occupy the entire country by means of corps in echelon, and the same scattering of his forces, are everywhere observable. He was convinced that his troops had only to show themselves in order to disperse these contemptible gatherings. Every-

[1] This calculation is taken from a monthly return dated the 18th of July following, and which estimates our total force in Spain at 116,000 men. This number could not have materially varied from the beginning of June. Moreover, it was only a minimum.

[2] Napoleon to Murat, May 30. [3] Napoleon to Bessières, June 3.

[4] Napoleon to Murat, June 8.

where too he gave his generals the same instructions: 'To *make examples.*' They long since knew what that word signified in his mouth. To burn, to pillage, and to shoot; such was the sanguinary programme, of which some amongst them nobly evaded the performance, but which the majority carried out with a rigour that had already engrafted itself not only on the tastes but even on the habits of the army.

These arrangements, insufficient though they were, at first had a semblance of success. Our troops easily worsted the insurgents when they met them in the plain or intrenched in a town without fortifications. Verdier defeated them without trouble at Logrono, Frère at Segovia, Lasalle at Torquemada (June 6), where a series of executions began by a regular massacre; then, at the bridge of Cabezon, and before Valladolid, where Gregorio della Cuesta made his troops fight with their backs to a river. Merle, sent to Santander, after having helped Lasalle to gain his victories, beat Velarde with as little difficulty at Lantueno; while Lefebvre-Desnoettes in his march against Saragossa successively defeated the Arragonese bands at Tudela (June 8) and at Mallen (June 13). In all these affairs the resistance offered by the insurgents was wellnigh insignificant. We had only to fight gatherings of citizens and peasants, ill disciplined and ill appointed, whom the rapidity and harmony of our movements thoroughly bewildered. Nothing gives a better idea of their inexperience and natural inferiority than the proportionate losses on either side. At Logrono they had one hundred killed and we but one; at Cabezona they had upwards of five hundred, and we from fifteen to twenty; at Tudela three hundred, and we ten; at Mallen, in fine, they lost nearly one thousand men, and we scarcely twenty. Moreover, the greater number of these unfortunate victims fell during their flight beneath the swords of our cavalry, far more than in the actions, which lasted but a few moments. By these proportions one sees that they were true butcheries and not battles in the ordinary acceptation of the word. And yet those who thus massacred fugitives incapable of defending themselves, and who brought devastation into a country where no single interest, passion,

order, nor even shadow of a grievance summoned them, called their action glory. Those, on the contrary, who died on the threshold of their invaded hearths while invoking all that man holds dear and sacred, called it brigandage.

The two expeditions of the East and the South, especially Dupont's, which was to prove so disastrous, opened under auspices no less brilliant than those of the North. Moncey, who was to subdue Valencia, advanced by measured steps to Cuença, about half-way from Madrid (June 11), and there he prudently halted until Chabran, who was to second him by starting from Barcelona, and keeping close along the coast, should have made sufficient progress to allow him to advance farther. Chabran likewise had begun his march on the 4th of June, and had pushed forward to Tarragona. But the whole of Catalonia was in revolt behind him, notwithstanding the many strong places we occupied in several points. General Duhesme found himself blockaded by the insurrection in Barcelona to a degree that endangered his communications with the expeditionary corps, and Chabran was obliged to halt like Moncey, but with far more fear of being obliged to retrograde. Some days later they learnt that Desnoettes' easy triumphs had come to an end before Saragossa, where he was held in check by Palafox.

Dupont's march towards Andalusia had been more fortunate and more rapid. On the 1st of June this general, with fourteen thousand men, impetuously entered the long defiles of the Sierra-Morena, which before long were to witness his defeat. Dupont may be said to have been one of Napoleon's favourite generals. At Albeck, at Halle, and at Friedland, he had brought himself into notice by brilliant and dashing deeds. He was on the point of being made marshal, and Napoleon had offered him the campaign in Andalusia as an opportunity of meriting this longed-for crowning of his military career. He started, therefore, full of ardour, of hope, and of desire to distinguish himself. Like Moncey, he was to collect numberless Spanish and Swiss auxiliaries on his way. But he underwent the same disappointment, and could only muster some two thousand

Swiss whose doubtful fidelity stood in great need of encouragement. At Baylen he learnt that the whole of Andalusia was up in arms, and that he would have to fight several regular battles before he could reach Cadiz. Nevertheless he persisted in marching on Cordova by Andujar. The army of Cordova, anxious, like that of Seville, to fight on its own account, came to meet him as far as the bridge of Alcolea on the Guadalquivir. Dupont defeated it easily, in spite of his own numerical inferiority, but he experienced greater resistance than he expected, and his losses were more considerable than those of the other generals engaged at the same time (June 7). He pursued the Spaniards, sword in hand, along the road to Cordova, and appeared before that town after a forced march of several hours under a burning sun. Having ineffectually summoned the place to surrender, he burst open the gates with his cannon, and his soldiers rushed in, killing and devastating everything they found on their passage. They entered the houses, and indulged in low revels; then, in a state of intoxication, they pillaged the Cathedral, forced open the public chests, sacked the convents and dwellings of the rich. The general took from the Treasury depôts alone the sum of ten million reals for the wants of the army.

After this fine exploit Dupont, in order to fulfil his mission, ought to have immediately marched on to Seville and Cadiz, but he did not feel himself strong enough to advance farther, and shut himself up in Cordova whilst waiting for reinforcements that might enable him to finish his task. Thus abruptly following successes, which were more apparent than real, at the opening of this complicated campaign guided by Napoleon from Bayonne, a general halt was everywhere perceptible, in consequence of the insufficiency of our forces compared with the number of the enterprises; Moncey had stopped at Cuença, Chabran at Tarragona, Lefebvre-Desnoettes at Saragossa; Duhesme, in fine, was shut up in Barcelona, Dupont at Cordova. By the 15th of June everything had become uncertain, and we were held in check on all points, from the one defect of these detached operations.

Far from suspecting the danger of this position, Napoleon continued to entertain no doubts of success. On the 9th of June he loudly proclaimed the triumphant entry of Dupont into Seville, and of Moncey into Valencia, adding that Joseph's approaching entry into Spain would 'finally dissipate the disturbances, enlighten all minds, and everywhere re-establish tranquillity.'[1] It is not difficult to conceive that the first advantages gained over the insurgents might have thus deceived him, but the bad news received during the next few days in no wise opened his eyes. He was only irritated by Moncey's slowness, and again ordered both him and Chabran to march on Valencia. He considered the taking of Saragossa so certain that he sent a colonel of engineers 'to put the castle into an efficient state of repair, so that it might keep the town in check.'[2] In short, on the 19th of June, when all the elements of this difficult position were known to him, he went so far,—with a species of aberration that seems scarcely credible,—as to command that simultaneously with the disarmament of the rebels companies of national guards should be formed in each town to assist the Alcaldes, assume the responsibility, and maintain the tranquillity of the country. He adds, 'This is what ought to be done at Toledo, at Aranjuez, at Segovia, and *everywhere else*.'[3] It was to his confidant Savary,—recently gone to Madrid to supply Murat's place, who had fallen dangerously ill from vexation at his failure, —that Napoleon communicated this bright idea.

Fortunately, he had at length under his hand at Bayonne a wonderful specific, which, according to him, would infallibly put an end to the disturbances in Spain. Such troubles and disorders ought, in his opinion, to surprise no one. At all periods they had been the inevitable accompaniments of every crisis called an interregnum. The presence and the coronation of King Joseph would restore order, and rally round him not only the lovers of peace, but also those numerous classes who more than all else require a settled

[1] Napoleon to Talleyrand, June 9, 1808.
[2] Napoleon to Berthier, June 17, 1808.
[3] Napoleon to Savary, June 19, 1808.

state of affairs. Joseph was known in Europe to be a sovereign of a gentle, peaceful disposition. No doubt the Spaniards, if once forced to choose between such a prince and the evils of hopeless anarchy, would end by adopting him, at least as a last resource, despite their distrustful national susceptibility. Joseph, therefore, must accept the crown and show himself as soon as possible to his people, in order to reassure, tranquillise, and conciliate them. Napoleon was perfectly aware that Joseph had left Naples with regret, and he was by no means sure of his final resolve. He determined, in consequence, to hurry him on and to dazzle him from the instant of his arrival, so as to leave him no time for reflection.

Joseph had started towards the end of May. As soon as he knew of his approach to Bayonne, Napoleon, without waiting for his arrival, hastened to publish a decree proclaiming him king of Spain and the Indies, grounding it on the urgent necessity of 'securing the happiness of Spain by putting an end to the interregnum.' The decree made allusion, it is true, to the wishes of the Junta, of the Council of Castile, and of the municipality of Madrid; but this mention was in no wise meant to be a mark of deference to the national will; and Napoleon transmitted his rights after the manner of a king of the old *régime*. This decree appeared on the 6th of June; next day, the 7th, Joseph arrived at Pau and heard of his accession. He knew nothing as yet of what had occurred in Spain, for all news had been most carefully intercepted. Napoleon went to meet him some leagues from Bayonne. He made him get into his carriage, overwhelmed him with demonstrations of tenderness quite unusual on his part, and then, with customary impetuosity, revealed to him all the plans he had devised for the prosperity, grandeur, and consolidation of the new monarchy.[1]

When the two brothers reached Bayonne, poor Joseph had scarcely found an opportunity of putting in one word during the pauses of this brilliant monologue. At Bayonne

[1] See Miot de Melito, the Memoirs of King Joseph, and Toreno, so well informed on this point.

the scene changed. The traveller was not allowed one moment's repose. On descending from his carriage the Empress met him at the foot of the stairs surrounded by all her ladies-in-waiting, ready to congratulate him on his new kingdom. Another surprise awaited him in the interior of the palace. When he entered the Hall of State, Joseph was received by all the deputations which Napoleon had obliged to come to Bayonne—some willingly and some by force—from all the towns occupied by the French army. There were assembled men, some of whom bore the greatest names in Spain; the dukes of Ossuna, of Infantado, and of Frias, the prince of Castelfranco, the counts of Santa-Colonna and of Fernan-Nunez; and at their side bishops, former ministers, courtiers, high functionaries, and even one inquisitor, Don Raymond Ethenard y Salinas. And all these great personages were submissive and devoted subjects, with the bearing and protestations of such. They saluted Joseph as king with acclamations. Then each of the deputations which composed the Junta came forward in turn to present an address of felicitation.

Joseph, suffering from the excitement which is the ordinary result of a long journey, and fasting, moreover, from early morn, although it was then almost ten o'clock at night, was enchanted, intoxicated, and half-bewildered by this unexpected reception. Naturally vain, he accepted these orations with delight, and with the air of a man only half-awake and not quite certain whether it were not the continuation of a dream. A most disagreeable incident, however, soon struck a false note in this concert of benedictions, and betrayed the concealed art of the stage effect which was so good an imitation of nature. The duke of Infantado, after having read the congratulatory address in the name of the grandees, let fall some fearfully discordant words. 'Sire!' said he to Joseph, 'the laws of Spain do not permit us to offer anything else to your Majesty. *We expect that the nation will make known its views and will authorise us to give free expression to our sentiments.*' This sudden reference to the Spanish nation and its slighted rights produced an extraordinary effect on Napoleon. He

rushed to the duke, overwhelmed him with reproaches, desired him to go and join the insurrection rather than shield himself behind such subterfuges, and finished by his customary strong argument, namely, by threatening to have him shot. The duke, intimidated, made excuses, and his seditious address was instantly modified; but the episode cast a chill over a ceremony which had gone on so well hitherto.[1] The encouraging terms in which Joseph addressed the inquisitor in reply to his compliments were much noticed, for the French having come to Spain in the name of progress and as missionaries of civilisation, it was supposed that they would at least have taken to themselves the easily-earned credit of abolishing an odious and unpopular tribunal. But it was not until later, when they perceived the inutility of their efforts to conciliate the clergy, that they deemed fit to make this concession to philosophical opinions. Joseph, with his most affable smile, replied to the inquisitor, 'that, although there were other countries where several different forms of worship were permitted, Spain ought to consider herself fortunate that on her soil none but the *one true religion* was honoured.' It was impossible to make a more clear promise to respect the principle of a State religion.

This solemnity terminated, Joseph was king. He could no longer withdraw. Within the next few days, although he did not yet know what a crown of thorns he had placed on his head, he began to catch a glimpse of the truth: but it was too late to reject this fatal present; he was king, and Napoleon was not the man to allow him to turn back. On the 15th of June the deputies of this Junta, which was so appropriately called *Extraordinary*, commenced their sittings, notwithstanding the insufficiency of their numbers, and in compliance with a short empty form proceeded to discuss the projected constitution, which they were permitted, not to examine, but to approve of. It were superfluous if not fastidious to stop to consider this stillborn production, a feeble copy of all the lucubrations in the same style which emanated from Napoleon. These morbid

[1] Cevallos, de Pradt.

compositions do not present even those outward appearances by which the people are so readily caught. They breathe nothing but uniformity, void and emptiness. I shall merely recall the fact that this *regenerator* of Spain dared to offer the country, as a precious gift, a senate in which figured two Committees of *Individual Liberty* and *Liberty of the Press*, that worked so well in the French Senate, and a legislative body, *whose deliberations were to be secret.* The first article of the Constitution stated that 'the religion of the State is the Catholic religion. *No other is permitted.*'[1]

Joseph then formed his ministry of the men he found around him, and of whom the majority had already served in that capacity. Many amongst them were distinguished for talent. They had rallied round him from different motives: some affected by the malady common to men who have once exercised power, others in the chimerical hope of being able to change the current of affairs. Urquijo was Secretary of State, Azanza Minister of the Indies, Mazzarredo Minister of Marine, O'Farrill and Cabarrus, of War and Finance; Cevallos, of Foreign Affairs. Napoleon had destined Jovellanos the historian, an upright and popular man, for the Ministry of the Interior, but Jovellanos refused it, notwithstanding the entreaties of some of his friends. None the less did Napoleon publish his appointment in the *Gazette de Madrid*, either in the hope of more easily gaining him over when once compromised in this manner, or of dishonouring him in the opinion of the national party by a persistent calumny, which Joseph had not the courage to stop. It was the fate of this man who had been made king against his will, at the same time to have ministers against their will. Lastly, Joseph appointed his great functionaries. At length, on the 7th of July, all was finished and in order; the proclamation of the new king, the everlasting gratitude of the courtiers, the constitution, the appointments about court, the oaths of fidelity, the commemoration medals. Nothing was wanting to Joseph but subjects.

[1] See the Spanish Constitution in the *Moniteur* of July 15, 1808.

CHAPTER XIV.

CAPITULATIONS OF BAYLEN AND CINTRA—THE FRENCH RETREAT TO THE EBRO

(*July–September* 1808)

DURING the three weeks occupied in these preparations for the new reign, the position of our army in Spain was growing worse; no reinforcements could be drawn from any quarter nearer than the Rhine and the Elbe, with the exception of a few old regiments lately returned to France, and which Napoleon had been obliged to disperse in different directions. On the other hand, the strength of the insurrection was daily increasing. On the East Marshal Moncey, having been ordered by Napoleon to march at all hazards on Valencia, reached that place about the end of June, after several severe encounters on his way. Moreover, an assault which was attended with the loss of three hundred men, forced him to admit the impossibility of taking Valencia, and he had to return to Cuença amidst countless dangers. On the West the Spanish insurgents not only held their positions, but they had become considerably stronger in consequence of a most serious event. The whole of Portugal had risen against Junot, who far from being able to send detachments to Bessières and Dupont, as ordered by Napoleon, had the utmost difficulty in maintaining himself at the points he already occupied. In the South, after having waited in vain for Dupont's promised arrival, our squadron at Cadiz was obliged to surrender to the insurgents.

General Dupont, dreading the loss of his communications in the Sierra-Morena, and finding his position at

Cordova endangered by the army of Castaños, who held him in check on his right towards Seville, and by the army of Granada marching on his left towards Jaën, had retreated to Andujar. There he was protected by the Guadalquivir, and backed by the opening defiles of the Sierra-Morena. By Napoleon's orders, Savary sent to his support the Vedel division, hitherto stationed at Toledo, which had been selected as an intermediate point. But this assistance, though useful in maintaining his communications, was in no wise sufficient to enable Dupont to resume the offensive.

The Spanish army of Andalusia, of all the armies of the insurrection, was not only the most numerous, the best disciplined, and the most formidable from the number of regular soldiers it contained, but was also the one composed of the most fiery spirits.

The mutilated bodies of their comrades on the retreat from Cordova to Andujar had horrified our soldiers, and shown them that they had to do with an enemy who would neither give nor expect any quarter.

Neither in Italy nor Germany had they ever been punished for the sacking of towns. It seemed to them that it produced a salutary impression on the inhabitants, and, as it suited their instincts for pillage and debauchery, they availed themselves of the first pretext that offered to indulge these propensities. At Lubeck, the passage of a few bands of fugitives through the town, though without the consent of the inhabitants, had been used as the signal for fearful destruction. A shot fired from one house was often sufficient. Yet the Germans received our soldiers with kindness, and in consideration of their light-hearted, thoughtless gaiety, they constantly pardoned them the confusion they caused wherever they appeared. Machiavelli remarks that of all nations the French are those whose exactions are the most readily endured; because, he says, they do not know how to preserve the fruits they gather, and ordinarily spend it amongst those whom they have robbed.[1] The adventurers of the Empire pillaged with life

[1] *Ritratti de Francia.*

and gaiety, as may be seen by the songs of that period, which are full of the praises of Venus, Bacchus, and Bellona; that is to say, of lust and drunkenness in conjunction with war. They had apparently persuaded themselves that they acted all these parts with so much grace, that no one could, on that account, bear them ill will. But the Spaniards, more susceptible than the Germans, resented these pleasantries. Immediately after the sack of Cordova, they systematically began killing every isolated soldier within their reach. At times they massacred them with an unexampled refinement of cruelty, for the express purpose of making a deep and terrifying impression on their invaders, and which in fact produced a most painful effect. Dupont's corps, on its return to Andujar, had, in consequence, lost in a great degree that assurance which is so necessary an ingredient to the moral bearing of a soldier.

The small reinforcements at Napoleon's disposal had been sent in part to Saragossa, of which General Verdier had just assumed command of the siege (July 1), and in part to Catalonia, where Duhesme was so much harassed by the insurgent corps that he had been obliged to recall Chabran from Tarragona. The remainder were destined for Bessières, who, stationed with a large force at Burgos, was commissioned to keep the insurgents of Gallicia, of the Asturias, of Leon, and of Old Castile, at a respectful distance. They were still commanded by old La Cuesta, now aided by General Blake. Bessières' corps, according to Napoleon's idea, was the one which ought to strike the decisive blow in the campaign. To Bessières he reserved the honour of gaining a kind of Spanish Jena victory. All the other operations, even those of Dupont and Moncey, were secondary. The plains of Old Castile were, according to the Emperor, the key of our military positions. This once taken, all the other defences of Spain would fall of their own accord. Napoleon's illusion on this point was complete, and it is revealed in a manner that leaves no room for doubt, both in his letters to Joseph and in the innumerable and circumstantial notes he dictated for

Savary. To Bessières all the disposable reinforcements should be sent, for he it was who should protect Madrid—'*and there was everything;*'[1] if Dupont experienced a check 'it would be of little consequence, but any blow to Marshal Bessières would *be a blow aimed at the heart of the army, and one which would paralyse it.*'[2] Savary from his presence on the spot saw matters from a more sensible point of view than his master,—for one must be just to Savary,—and took upon himself to send to Dupont, in answer to his vehement requests, a fresh reinforcement composed of Gobert's division. Napoleon blamed him severely for it. '*Dupont has a larger force than he requires.*' It was to Bessières that Gobert should have been despatched. 'I am angry,' writes Napoleon, 'that Savary does not feel the fault he has committed in hesitating to reinforce Bessières. . . . It was for this marshal that I destined Gobert's division.'[3] And in the note I have already quoted, he adds the following observation, which more clearly conveys his thought, '*The true manner of reinforcing Dupont is by sending troops to Bessières.*'

Events were soon to prove to Napoleon by a terrible lesson that in this he was radically wrong, but it is not superfluous to show how and why he deceived himself. This great Captain here committed an error analogous to the one he so often turned into ridicule at the beginning of his career, when one of his adversaries reproached him with 'not fighting according to rule.' He now applied to the Spaniards the political and military routine which had served him so well when opposing the old centralised monarchies of Europe, without perceiving that he had now to deal with circumstances of an entirely new character, and that neither the men nor the nature of things resembled those he had had to contend with hitherto. A Jena had been possible against a military kingdom, because the regular troops which form the strength of such a state, if once destroyed or dispersed, being by their very nature

[1] Notes for Savary, July 13. Sixth observation.
[2] *Ibid.* Fourth observation.
[3] Napoleon to Joseph, July 13.

incapable of reconstituting themselves, the state was left defenceless. But the case was altogether different with forces recruited by the insurrection; first of all, because being all volunteers, they spontaneously re-formed after a battle, and also because each army stood alone, for at that moment there were as many armies in Spain as there were provinces. The incredulity with which Napoleon refused to see the force and gravity of this revolt was due to illusions of another kind, or rather to the very constitution of his intellect. His thoroughly calculating mind could not conceive the idea of such wild or disinterested fanaticism, or understand the fit of heroic madness which had seized a whole nation. It was a moral phenomenon completely above his comprehension. That miserable conscripts, recruited by pressure of the gendarmerie, should allow themselves to be killed for a piece of ribbon, or a cross, for promotion, or that false coin called glory, seemed to him not only most natural, but an ordinary fact, like the course of the seasons. But that poor peasants and inoffensive citizens, without being paid for it, or forced to it, should let themselves be killed for their country and for liberty,—for that *old humbug* as the imperial soldiery styled it,—was something quite beyond his powers of imagination; these, verily, were old women's tales! True, he had seen the movement of 1792; but that was now like distant antiquity; moreover, Spain could scarcely be considered revolutionary. No less a mistake was it to imagine that in holding Madrid he held everything else. When he had taken Berlin he was master of Prussia. When he had taken Vienna he was master of Austria. That was very nearly the truth. But whoever took Madrid was simply master of the ground occupied by the capital. In Spain, thanks to the strength and power of resistance of the provincial constitution of that country, the centre was everywhere and yet nowhere. It was useless, therefore, to dream of creating a theatrical effect on any one single point, for such a point did not exist. And the army of Cuesta was no more the head of the insurrection than Madrid was the heart of the country. All the phantasma-

goria of grand military effect was here at fault, without the possibility of its being put into play. Submission was definitely imposed on none, except on those who were killed, and, as Joseph wrote a month later, 'a hundred thousand permanent scaffolds would have been required to maintain the prince condemned to reign over the Spaniards.'[1]

How powerful soever may be the verdict of established prejudice in favour of Napoleon's marvellous faculty of penetration, it is impossible not to admit that these striking characteristics of the Spanish insurrection totally escaped his observation, and this in spite of facts and of the most clear and positive information. He did not begin to open his eyes until after his army had been thrown back upon the Ebro. Joseph had entered Spain on the 9th of July. Henceforward the Emperor received the wisest and most urgent warnings day by day; from a witness, too, who certainly had no motive for disguising the truth. From the instant he trod upon Spanish soil, poor Joseph perceived that no one sided with him. The aspect of the abandoned villages, the fierce countenances he met with on his road, the coldness with which his advances were received, the increasing embarrassment of those who had embraced his cause, and were now regretting their adhesion—in short, his own complete isolation, convinced him of the profound and universal hatred entertained towards the French domination, as well as of the inadequacy of our army to subdue twelve millions of rebellious men. 'No one has hitherto told all the truth,' he wrote to Napoleon on July 12; 'the fact is that not one single Spaniard comes forward to take part with me, except the small number who were present at the Junta, and those who travel with me; the others who have reached this are hiding themselves, dismayed by the unanimous opinion of their countrymen,'—and he concludes by demanding 'a great many troops and money.'

Besides this discovery, Joseph made another no less wounding to his self-love, namely, that the generals, and even Savary, took no more account of his royalty than if it did not exist, and while outwardly rendering him homage,

[1] Joseph to Napoleon, August 14, 1808.

continued, nevertheless, to obey the Emperor alone. He made loud complaints to his brother, asserting with truth that, as he bore the burden, he ought at least to possess the power. The Emperor, discontented with Savary, who had exceeded his instructions by sending reinforcements to Dupont, this time, as an exception, pretended to disapprove of his lieutenant. He speaks of Savary with supreme contempt, and blames *his incapacity.* 'He is a man *fit to execute orders*,' he says, 'good for secondary operations, but who has neither sufficient experience nor powers of calculation to guide so large a machine.' But this satisfaction in words was all that Joseph could obtain. So long as Napoleon lived there should be no other power in Spain but his. Like Murat, Joseph cherished the idle hope of attaching his new subjects to him by the gentleness and affability of his proceedings, and desired to select his ministers from amongst those men who were most highly esteemed. He wished to put a stop to the pillaging habits which disgraced the French army, and to remove from the government a man like Savary, who, as he expressed it, *had filled the lowest offices.* His representations, however, were received with contemptuous pity, like the complaints of a sick child or the visions of an enfeebled mind. But this state of affairs was about to change, at least so it was confidently predicted at Bayonne. Bessières could at length fight the long-expected battle against Cuesta and Blake, which was to decide the fate of Spain. These generals had under their orders an army of about 25,000 men, recruited in Gallicia, in Old Castile, and in the Asturias; but they were divided by feelings of rivalry detrimental to unity of command, and their troops, though animated by the best spirit, were little more expert than at the outset of the campaign. Bessières' forces, it is true, were inferior in numbers by almost one-half, but the formation of his army, composed for the greater part of excellent troops, gave him a great advantage over his opponents. From Burgos, then his head-quarters, he advanced rapidly towards the insurgents. He met them on the 14th of July, near Medina de Rio Seco, between Valladolid and Bene-

vente. He attacked them with impetuosity, and the rebels, heavily and awkwardly ranged in two lines, were in no way able to support each other. They were petrified with surprise at the rapidity of our movements. Bessières at first concentrated all his efforts against Blake's corps, which was soon disbanded, and not until they took to flight did the regular troops of Cuesta come forward to recommence the fight. In their first rush they overthrew all before them, and even captured one of our batteries. But all Bessières' forces were then turned against the Spanish reserve. Charged by our cavalry, it quickly lost its advantages and in its turn soon fell back. Then the whole of our line advanced together against the insurgents, whose retreat was changed into a fearful rout. This was the moment to make what Napoleon called an example, and General Lasalle's cavalry was commissioned to execute the movement. They dashed forward in all directions in pursuit of these 25,000 fugitives maddened by fright, and massacred four or five thousand that had remained on the battle-field. On our side we lost but seventy killed and three hundred wounded. The town of Medina de Rio Seco was instantly seized and given up to pillage.

The example was as complete as if Napoleon himself had presided at the operation; and truly he looked upon this victory as a great and decisive event. In his eyes the revolt was henceforth knocked on the head. 'This,'[1] he writes to Joseph, 'is the *most important event of the Spanish war*, and gives a decided tone to affairs.' Ordinarily so sparing of praise, he now congratulated Bessières in the most unmeasured language. 'No battle,' he writes to him, 'was ever gained under more important circumstances; it decides matters in Spain.'[2]

Joseph, though desirous enough to let himself be persuaded of this, was nevertheless obliged, in spite of these reassuring prognostics, to acknowledge that all was not over, as he would fain believe. He made his entry into Burgos whilst the impression of this terrifying victory was

[1] Napoleon to Joseph, July 17, 1808.
[2] To Bessières, same date.

fresh on the minds of the inhabitants, but far from finding their spirits cowed by the reverse at Rio Seco, he there read on every countenance the same expression of hatred and defiance which had struck him as he advanced into Spain. 'Fear does not make me see double,' he wrote to his brother. '. . . Since I have been in Spain, I every day say to myself, my life is of little value, and I give it up to you. . . . *I am not frightened by my position, but it is unique in history. I have not one single partisan here.*'[1]

Savary, who was more in the centre of Spain than Joseph, was still further dismayed by what he saw and heard, as well as by the alarming news he received from Andalusia. In his trouble he had taken upon himself to command a general concentration of troops upon Madrid, and to write to Bayonne that everything had yet to be done in Spain. Napoleon at once sent him an order through Berthier to countermand this retrograde movement, although, had it been carried out in time, it would have saved Dupont's corps; and, in formal terms, he censured the sensible view of affairs taken by Savary. Berthier wrote, 'The Emperor considers that you are wrong in saying that nothing has been done during the last six weeks. . . . Every sensible man in Spain has thoroughly changed his opinion, and regards the insurrection with the utmost grief; affairs are in the most prosperous condition since the battle of Rio Seco.'[2] In accordance with this, Napoleon desired that the offensive should be resumed on all points. He consented, however, though not until the 18th of July, that Gobert's division should be sent to Dupont. Savary had despatched it many days previously, but even this succour did not preserve us from Baylen. Napoleon was never more tranquil, nor more confident of the success of his enterprise. On the 21st of July he considered the moment had arrived for quitting Bayonne in order to make a journey through the southern provinces of France, and before starting he dictated a long despatch in which he thoroughly

[1] Joseph to Napoleon, July 18, 1808.

[2] Berthier to Savary, July 18. Letter inserted in the *Correspondance* of King Joseph.

examined all the contingencies of our military position, and pointed out to each general the line of conduct he should take. He particularly studied Dupont's position, 'upon which,' he says, 'every care should be bestowed.' He praises him 'for having kept his place beyond the mountains in the basin of Andalusia,' which definitely shows that he approved of his halt at Andujar; he desired him to resume the offensive with his five-and-twenty thousand men; 'for,' he adds, 'there is not the least doubt that *even with twenty thousand men General Dupont will overthrow everything before him;*' then, after having ordered Moncey to reoccupy San Clemente, and to continue to threaten Valencia, Verdier to press the siege of Saragossa, and Reille to form a junction with Duhesme in Catalonia, he thus reviews the situation:

'*There is nothing to fear* on the side of Marshal Bessières, nor in the north of Castile, nor in the kingdom of Leon; *there is nothing to fear* in Arragon, Saragossa will fall some day, sooner or later; *there is nothing to fear* in Catalonia; *there is nothing to fear* for the communications from Burgos to Bayonne . . . the only menacing point is on the side of General Dupont; but with 25,000 men *he has many more than he requires to achieve great results. . . . Strictly speaking, with one-and-twenty thousand men he will have more than eighty chances in a hundred in his favour.*'[1]

This despatch was dictated at Bayonne on the 21st of July 1808; and on that same day Dupont, defeated and surrounded at Baylen, signed the capitulation in virtue of which his whole army became prisoners of war. We must turn back a little, in order thoroughly to understand the causes of this memorable disaster.

Intrenched at Andujar since the 18th of June, after he had evacuated Cordova, Dupont occupied a very insecure position on the Guadalquivir. This river, almost dried up in summer, was fordable in many places, and was little more to him than an imaginary line of defence. The front of his army, therefore, was almost uncovered; the rear no better protected. The position of Andujar was supposed

[1] Notes on the actual position of the army in Spain, July 21, 1808.

to close the entrance to that long defile of the Sierra-Morena which stretches from Baylen to Valdepeñas, passing by Guarraman, La Carolina, St. Helena, and Despeñas-Perros; but it in no way served this purpose, for besides the main route which traversed these localities there existed three or four other small roads, practicable for infantry, and which, starting from Mengibar, Linares, Baëza, and Ubeda, met, not only at Baylen, but at La Carolina and even at Despeñas-Perros, that is to say, at all the principal points of our communication with Madrid. If it were necessary to guard this passage of the Sierra-Morena effectually, a retrograde movement should have been made to La Carolina, which is its key, for even the position of Baylen could easily be turned. At all events, anything being preferable to standing on the defensive in bad positions, it would have been better for Dupont to have commenced the attack, choosing his own time for it, especially when he had received the reinforcement of 6000 men which Vedel brought him at the end of June. But he had strict orders to stay at Andujar. Savary, who had a far clearer idea of Dupont's position than Napoleon himself, wished to recall him from beyond the mountains when he formed the plan, so sharply criticised by the Emperor, of *drawing everything close to Madrid*;[1] the excessive displeasure, however, which every retrograde movement caused the latter, made him postpone this project, and he did not decide upon it until too late.

Such was the situation of Dupont in the first days of July 1808. Charged with the defence of positions devoid of strength, in a feverish and unhealthy country, he had to fight the strongest and the most numerous army then in Spain, with but 18,000 men, for the most part very young and inexperienced, and whom in consequence of the scarcity of provisions he was moreover forced to place upon half rations. The troops of every arm commanded by Castaños after the junction of the insurgents of Granada with those of Seville, of Jaën, and of Cadiz, amounted to not less than

[1] Savary's correspondence with Dupont leaves no doubt upon this matter. In a letter of July 16 he formally announces to him his intention of soon recalling him towards Madrid.

35,000 men, of whom more than half were regular troops. Dupont, it is true, received a new reinforcement of 4000 or 5000 men on the 7th of July, brought to him by General Gobert, but this succour in no degree restored the balance. In order to guard his communications, perpetually harassed by guerilla bands, Dupont was obliged to disperse his Andujar troops beyond La Carolina, and to keep them constantly moving. The impracticable task he had to accomplish might thus be summarised: with a total force of 22,000 men he had to watch and defend the line of the Guadalquivir from Andujar to Ubeda, along an extended front of fifteen leagues; and in his rear, to guard a defile twenty leagues in length.

On the 15th of July, after somewhat feeling his way, Castaños commenced his operations. Two of his lieutenants, Reding and the Marquis of Coupigny, the one a Swiss, the other a French *emigré*, took up positions on the Guadalquivir, the former at Mengibar, the latter at Villanueva, both threatening to turn Baylen and Andujar, while Castaños himself, posted at Arjonilla, menaced Dupont's camp in front. This general had foreseen the attack. He had placed Vedel's division at Baylen and General Liger-Belair with some troops before Mengibar. At Andujar, the action was limited to a cannonade between Castaños and Dupont. At Mengibar, Liger-Belair, repulsed by Reding, was reinforced in time by Vedel, who arrived in haste from Baylen, and drove Reding back beyond the Guadalquivir. So far all went well. It was evident from this, however, that the enemy, thanks to his numerical superiority, could multiply his attacks on many more points than we were capable of watching at the same moment. In order to guard one we were obliged to withdraw our guard from another no less essential to our safety, and the result of this going to and fro could not fail to become most dangerous to us.

Dupont, foreseeing that the attack was about to recommence, and somewhat alarmed at the number of troops displayed by Castaños on the 15th, despatched an order to Vedel to send him a '*battalion*, and in case he had few enemies in front, a *brigade*.' Next day, the 16th, his over-

zealous lieutenant, hearing the cannonade recommence on the side of Andujar, hastened thither, not with one brigade, but with his entire division, leaving nothing at Mengibar but Liger-Belair's detachment. This fault at once entailed its own punishment; for, the instant Vedel had left, Reding reappeared at Mengibar, forced the passage of the Guadalquivir and drove off Liger-Belair, who had to retreat in the direction of Baylen. The position at Baylen was occupied by General Gobert, who had come thither on the previous evening from La Carolina. At the sound of cannon, he hurried to Liger-Belair's aid, but a ball struck him dead, and General Dufour, who assumed the command, was driven back on Baylen. In this manner the ferry of Mengibar, so important to us, came into possession of the Spaniards.

Dupont, who had at first approved of Vedel's movement, perceived the gravity of the fault that had been committed the moment he was informed of Gobert's death and of the defeat of his division. On the same evening, the 16th, he ordered Vedel 'to move rapidly on Baylen, there to form a junction with Dufour's corps, and then to drive the enemy back on Mengibar across the river.' On the morning of the 17th he confirmed this order, recommending him, moreover, to keep watch on Baëza and La Carolina, points so essential to our communications. Vedel had already arrived at Baylen, but, to his extreme surprise, he had found no one there. Led astray by false reports, the truth of which he found it almost impossible to ascertain,—for, not even at the sacrifice of gold had we a single spy in Spain,—Dufour had started at midnight to go in search of the enemy in the direction of La Carolina. Reding, however, had been able meanwhile to reach it without passing by Baylen, having at his command the choice of two cross roads which terminated at La Carolina: the one by Linares, the other by Vilches. Vedel, deceived like Dufour, but above all impressed with the importance of preserving our communications and of supporting his colleague, also marched to La Carolina, neglecting to make a reconnaissance at Mengibar, lest Dufour might be crushed

during the time it would involve; and Dupont, deceived in his turn, entirely approved the course he adopted. In this manner errors were linked together, which in this complicated state of affairs may well be termed inevitable, for, even had they not occurred, other mistakes quite as serious would have been committed. Vedel rejoined Dufour at Guarraman. The reports of Reding's march to La Carolina being there confirmed, the two generals pushed forward deeper and deeper into the defiles of the Sierra-Morena, at the same time leaving two posts of the greatest importance unoccupied behind them, namely Baylen and Mengibar, which they believed to be secure from all attack, as they supposed the enemy to be entangled in the Sierra (July 17).

Meanwhile Reding, whom they were seeking so far off, had never left the neighbourhood of Mengibar. He had taken advantage of the appearance of some guerilla bands in the Sierra to strengthen current rumours, the effect of which was to disperse his adversaries. The moment he became aware of their absence, he occupied Baylen with a strong force, in conjunction with Coupigny's division, and thus cut off from Dupont's corps its natural line of retreat. This movement he effected during the day of the 18th of July, with about 18,000 men. No doubt he ran the risk of being himself placed between two fires, in the event of Vedel's speedy return, but under every circumstance his retreat on Mengibar was secured. Moreover, by combining his movements with those of Castaños, still stationed before Andujar, he possessed such superiority of forces over Dupont, that he was justified in believing he would have time to crush him before any diversion could take place. Nor was it until late on that same day that Dupont heard with dismay of the presence of one of the enemy's corps at Baylen, and even then he could not ascertain its full strength. He determined however to evacuate Andujar instantly, in order to relieve Baylen and to place himself again in communication with his lieutenants.

Night having fallen, Dupont decamped secretly, and, thanks to his precautions, succeeded in escaping the vigilance

of Castaños, who remained before Andujar. Dupont had still about 11,000 men, composed of the Barbou division, of the Frésia cavalry, the marines of the guard, the guards of Paris, and one Swiss regiment. Compelled to keep watch on both sides simultaneously, while embarrassed by an interminable file of from seven to eight hundred carriages conveying his sick and the baggage, he placed his vehicles in the centre, and, dividing his troops into two corps, sent the weaker one to the front, as he conceived Reding to be less formidable than Castaños. A distance of not less than a league separated these two corps of combatants, which, had they been united for the first attack, might perhaps have forced the passage. About three o'clock on the morning of the 19th, on reaching the Rumblar—a torrent that flows at a short distance from Baylen—the head of our columns came into collision with the outposts of Reding, who, on his part, was preparing to march on Andujar. The action commenced at four o'clock, but with only two brigades on our side, a force barely sufficient for maintaining the defensive. The remainder of our troops, recalled in all haste from the rear to the front, took part in the fight, but in successive detachments, which deprived their efforts of the union and strength necessary to form an opening in the ranks of the enemy. Our soldiers rushed to the attack with distinguished valour, and drove back the first Spanish line several times, but they did not succeed in repulsing the second; and Reding's artillery, far superior to ours, dismounted our batteries in a few moments.

Towards ten o'clock that morning the Spaniards rushed on our position on all sides. Cavalry charges vigorously executed by the dragoons of General Frésia and the chasseurs of General Dupré drove them back in disorder on their own *corps d'armée*, but this did not gain us any advantage. The Spanish reserve continued unshaken. Soon however the fighting slackened; our soldiers, worn out by a march of seven leagues, and by the insupportable heat, suffering too from fearful thirst in this waterless desert, lost heart and grew dejected; and ultimately fought with each

other for the possession of a cistern, or for a few drops of water in the dried-up torrent-bed. Dupont, in despair, tried to make a last attack towards mid-day, but it failed like all the others, Reding's army presenting an impenetrable barrier. One thousand five hundred men, many officers among the number, were disabled, and Dupont himself was wounded. The heights were crowned by armed peasants, who fired on us from behind the shelter of rocks and woods, while the Swiss soldiers, displeased at having to fight against their compatriots in the Spanish army, deserted. Before long cannon were heard in our rear. It was the army of Castaños, which, under command of Peñas, hastened to take part in the battle, and thus closed all issue to us. How was it possible to resist this fresh army, when we had not been able to conquer the first? This was the final blow. It was just two in the afternoon when Dupont asked Reding for a suspension of arms, to which he consented. But the capitulation which he demanded at the same time, with the view of obtaining his free passage to Madrid, was referred to Castaños, who refused it to him, requiring the unconditional surrender of his whole *corps d'armée*.

During these negotiations, which continued through the evening of the 19th and a part of the morning of the 20th, General Vedel, having returned from La Carolina, where he found no one to oppose him, and having lost much valuable time, came to take up his position at the rear of Reding's army. Reaching Baylen after the battle, about five in the afternoon, he immediately attacked the Spaniards, who were reposing on the faith of the armistice, and captured a thousand prisoners, besides several guns. But a stop was soon put to this combat by an order from Dupont, which informed Vedel of the negotiations then going on with the Spaniards. Castaños' refusal, however, afforded Dupont an opportunity of recommencing the battle on the 20th of July, with the assistance of the Vedel division. If his position between Castaños and Reding was most critical, that of Reding between Dupont and Vedel was no less unfavourable.

A bold stroke executed with that energy of which Dupont had given an example at Albeck, at Halle, at Friedland, and on so many other occasions, might very probably have opened a passage, though no doubt at a great sacrifice. But his soldiers were thoroughly demoralised, overpowered by fatigue and the privations of every description from which they had been suffering for the last two days. Dupont himself was disheartened, in proof of which we may note the fact, that instead of acting with ready resolve upon his own responsibility he assembled a council of war, when, according to the very terms of the deliberation, he 'asked its advice on the situation of the *corps d'armée*.' Heroic resolutions are rarely collective, and yet an inspiration of this nature could alone have saved him. Dupont was capable of experiencing one of these sudden illuminating flashes. He had proved it on many an occasion, but he was one of those soldiers whose elasticity depends more on his imagination than on his natural disposition, and whose mind is, in consequence, more liable to pass from one extreme to the other. He was a man of pleasure and of imagination, a pleasant and cultivated conversationalist, possessing literary tastes; and even since he had become a general he had competed for prizes in poetry. His writings show a decided inclination for pomposity and declamation; and even in his despatches there is no trace of the vigour and precision of military style. In fine, he had never met with any reverse, and was one of those men whose value depends on success. Nor had he ever been commander-in-chief, and now, upon the first occasion when he was left to himself, he found himself in a position beset with difficulties wellnigh insurmountable.

As might easily have been foreseen, the council was of opinion that resistance was impossible. Negotiations with Castaños were therefore renewed, through the medium of General Chabert, of General Marescat, who happened to be with Dupont's army without belonging to it, and of the Emperor's equerry, Villoutreys, who had already negotiated the armistice. Castaños was on the point of consenting to the return of our troops to Madrid, when by an unlucky

accident a despacth fell into his hands, in which Savary, more and more convinced of the necessity of concentrating the army round the capital, distinctly desired Dupont to march thither. Castaños at once insisted on his first conditions, and demanded that the two French divisions should surrender at discretion. At the request of our negotiators, however, he consented to allow Dupont to return by sea, provided the Vedel and Dufour divisions were included in the capitulation. Our negotiators had the weakness to accept this condition, in the chimerical hope of saving the two divisions then in danger by the sacrifice of the two others that were still free. In consequence they drew up a capitulation by virtue of which Dupont's entire corps, after having laid down their arms, were to move on towards the sea by San Lucar and Rota, in order to embark and be transported to France. Article 11 carefully stipulated the preservation of the baggage belonging to the superior officers, '*which should not be subjected to any examination;*' and article 15 stipulated that the generals 'should take the measures necessary to *find out and restore the sacred vessels which might have been carried off in different encounters, and particularly at the taking of Cordova.*'

When this document, containing these dishonourable stipulations, was brought to Dupont, on the morning of July 21, Vedel had been several hours gone, leaving in front of the enemy's outposts only a few troops as a blind. This general was at that moment out of reach with his two divisions, and the capitulation, which by an untenable fiction had constituted him prisoner whilst yet free, was not signed. Dupont's duty was clear and inexorable; he ought not to have ratified it at any price. The Spaniards, enraged at seeing that Vedel had escaped them, threatened Dupont that they would put his army to the sword. He ought to have run the risk and thrown on them the responsibility of an unjustifiable crime. But he yielded to their threats and sent Vedel an order to retrace his steps. He might at least have verbally advised him to disobey it, through the medium of the officer who conveyed the order, but he did not. Vedel, who was then at St. Helena, yielding against

his will, in accordance with the apparently unanimous advice of his officers, led his troops back to Baylen, where they shared the sad fate of Dupont's corps, and upwards of twenty thousand of that great and proud army fell by one stroke into the power of the enemy whom they most despised.[1]

The capitulation was violated almost as soon as concluded. The Junta of Seville refused to ratify it, and Dupont's troops, exposed to frightful treatment, remained prisoners of war until 1814, with the exception of the superior officers who were sent back to France. Dupont having complained with bitterness of this want of faith, the Governor of Andalusia, Thomas de Morla, answered him by insulting recriminations. On the 10th of August he wrote to him: 'Your Excellency constrains me to express truths which must be bitter to you. What right have you to demand the execution of a treaty concluded in favour of an army which entered Spain under the veil of alliance and of friendship; which has imprisoned our king and his family, sacked his palaces, assassinated and robbed his subjects, laid waste his country and usurped his crown? If your Excellency does not wish still further to draw upon yourself the just indignation of the people, whom I am labouring to appease, you must endeavour by your conduct to diminish the impression of the horrors you committed at Cordova. . . . How it stimulates the populace to know that one of your soldiers alone carried off two thousand one hundred and eighty French livres!'

There was little to answer to these recriminations, unless that the crimes of one do not justify those of others. Thus was lost in one day the whole of this army of Andalusia, exactly as though it had been swallowed up by some convulsion of nature. The incidents which brought about its ruin had been so varied, and at the same time so complicated, that each chief might with apparent reason shift the

[1] According to the report of Regnault de St. Jean D'Angely *on the capitulation of Baylen*, Dupont's corps numbered before the battle of Baylen 22,830 men, *present under arms*, and its effective strength was 27,067.

responsibility from his own shoulders, without observing that the determining force of the catastrophe altogether lay in that blind will which imposed upon them the law of defending themselves in an untenable position. They had all committed errors, and some of them faults, but they were placed in a situation where it was impossible not to commit them, and if they had sinned it was often through excessive zeal. Dupont had done wrong in remaining at Andujar against his convictions. Charged with the responsibility of the chief command, he ought to have disobeyed as Moncey had done, and have retreated either to La Carolina, or if he could not there feed his army, then he should have even crossed the Sierra-Morena; he had done wrong in not sacrificing at least a portion of his baggage, done wrong in not fighting with all his united forces. Finally, in the negotiations, he was guilty of a deplorable act of weakness in allowing the Vedel and Dufour divisions to be included in the capitulation. Vedel, in marching to Andujar with his entire division, when he was only asked for a brigade, and in losing precious time on his return from La Carolina to Baylen, had been scarcely less reprehensible. Dufour in short, by neglecting to make a reconnaissance at Mengibar before going in search of Reding at La Carolina, had committed a fatal mistake;[1] but the great culprit was the man who had thrown them into this inextricable difficulty by rousing the hatred of the nation against them; that infatuated Captain who thought that from Bayonne, a distance of five or six days, he could direct operations which required decision on the spot and at each moment. Napoleon alone was the true author of the disaster at Baylen by forbidding the army of Andalusia to recross the Sierra-Morena as Dupont and Savary desired. If Savary had implicitly

[1] See on this affair of Baylen, the *Observations* of General Dupont and his *Lettre sur l'Espagne* in 1808; the *Precis des opérations en Andalusia*, by General Vedel; the *Rapport* by Regenault and the *Interrogatoires* of Dupont and Vedel, published by the latter; the *Histoires des guerres de la Peninsule*, by General Fay; *L'Etude Historique sur la capitulation de Baylen*, by St. Maurice Cabang; Toréno; Napier's *History of the Peninsular War;* Robert Southey's *History of the Peninsular War*.

obeyed him, Dupont's loss would have occurred even sooner than it did, for he would not have been reinforced by the Gobert division until after the 20th of July. All these generals, so harshly treated by the fortune of war, had, after all, only been unlucky; they had fought bravely; they had seen great service, and it would be most unjust to their memories to blame them for not having held out to the last man, rather than submit to the conditions of Castaños. One man dared to reproach them for not having known how to die. But how often did not fate also call upon him to choose between death and defeat? At the Beresina, at Leipsic, Fontainebleau, and Waterloo; and how did he answer the summons?

Napoleon, nevertheless, continued his triumphant progress through the towns of the South of France, through Tarbes, Agen, Toulouse, and Bourdeaux, still persuaded, as he expressed it, that 'there was nothing further to fear in Spain.' Joseph had arrived at Madrid on the 20th of July under very different impressions. The *Moniteur* might assert in vain that his journey in Spain had been but one long ovation; that his entry to Madrid had taken place amidst '*the acclamations of an immense multitude.*'[1] His brother might in vain repeat to him in all his letters: 'Be courageous and gay, never doubt of complete success.' Joseph was not reassured. He did not find a penny in the public coffers,[2] he said, and all around were deserting him; implacable hostility lurked in every eye. He was the first to admit that these sentiments of animosity were too well justified, and to feel honest indignation at the excesses committed by our troops against his future subjects. He had already informed his brother of the shameful depredations committed by some of our officers, who had even torn off the silver buckles from the court harness for their own use;[3] before long he denounced to him another and more scandalous traffic that was carried on in objects of religious worship stolen from the churches and convents that had

[1] *Moniteur*, July 25 and August 6, 1808.
[2] Joseph to Napoleon, July 21, 1808.
[3] Joseph to Napoleon, July 16, 1808.

been given up to pillage. On July the 22d he wrote thus to Napoleon: 'If your Majesty would write to General Caulaincourt that you are aware of the pillage that is coolly carried on in the churches and houses of Cuença, you would do much good. *I know that the traffic in sacred vessels, which takes place at Madrid, has done a great deal of harm here.*' Two days later, on July 22, he again dwelt upon this point, and upon the difficulties of his situation; he denounced the generals who had imitated Caulaincourt, and implored his brother *to recall the robbers.*[1] He justly compared the Spanish movement to that of the French revolution. 'If France,' he said, 'had been able to place a million of men under arms, why should not Spain arm five hundred thousand? My enemies here are a nation of brave inhabitants, exasperated to the last degree. They speak publicly of my assassination. . . . The people have not had the consideration shown to them which they ought to have had.' Then recurring to an allegation of the Emperor's he writes: 'No, sire! the honest men are not on my side any more than the rogues. You are mistaken; *your glory will suffer shipwreck in Spain!*'

These representations, these lamentations, this prophetic terror so deeply felt by Joseph, produced no other effect on Napoleon than that of irritation; they seemed to him but the faint-heartedness of a timid nature and of an imagination too strongly impressed. He endeavoured, after his own fashion, to rouse Joseph's dejected mind. No matter what might happen, the submission of Spain was an acknowledged fact. It was already recognised by Europe. 'I this morning received news from Russia and letters from the Emperor. *The affair of Spain was quite an old affair there already, and was all settled!*' The affair of Spain settled in Russia! It would have been better for us if it had been settled at Madrid. Napoleon truly had notified to Alexander, in a letter dated July 8, the changes which he had just effected in Spain: '*Obliged*,' he said, '*to interfere in Spanish affairs*, he had, by the *irresistible course of events*, been led on to a system which, *while insuring the*

[1] Joseph to Napoleon, July 24, 1808.

happiness of Spain, insured the tranquillity of the Empire. In this new situation, Spain *ought to be more independent of Napoleon than she ever had been.*'[1] To these very candid explanations he added, with the object of discrediting the Spanish insurrection, an assertion which has been the starting-point of all the inventions that have been accumulated on this subject. 'I have reason,' he wrote to Alexander, 'to be well satisfied with persons of rank, of education, and of fortune. *The monks alone*, foreseeing the destruction of abuses, and the *agents of the Inquisition*, who discern the end of their existence, are *fomenting agitation in the country.*'

Joseph's letters and Napoleon's own correspondence afford the most glaring refutation of this unblushing falsehood. Next to the courtiers and high functionaries, the clergy formed the class that seemed most disposed to join Joseph. They were drawn on into the national movement, but they did not create it. On different occasions Joseph, and Napoleon himself, praised the conciliatory sentiments evinced by the clergy. A few days after his letter to Alexander, on the 25th of July, Napoleon wrote thus: 'Bessières' officer says *that the priests and even the monks earnestly desire tranquillity.*' Joseph's testimony is still more decisive. On July 26 he writes to his brother: 'I assembled all the heads of the regular and secular clergy, and have spoken to them for an hour. They seem to me to have gone away very well disposed.' The next day, July 27, while analysing the sentiments of the population in general, he reverts to the same subject: '*The grandees, and the rich*, but the women especially, *are detestable*,' he says. So much for those 'persons of rank, education, and fortune,' whom Napoleon represented as *very satisfactory.* As to the clergy, this is what Joseph says of them: 'The clergy whom I saw yesterday *have behaved well to-day.* I am informed that *many priests have infused good feeling amongst the people.*'[2]

Napoleon did not answer Joseph's lamentations and sinister forebodings until July 31. 'Brother!' he then

[1] Napoleon to Alexander, July 8, 1808.
[2] Joseph to Napoleon, July 27, 1808.

writes to him; 'the style of your letter of the 24th does not please me. There is no question of dying, but of living and being victorious, *which you are, and you will be. I shall find the columns of Hercules in Spain, but not the limit of my power.*' He then enumerates the succours he was despatching to Spain, and as to Joseph's complaints regarding the pillaging and the robbers, he says: 'Caulaincourt *did quite right at Cuença; the town was given up to pillage; that is the right of war, as it was taken by assault.* . . . Your position may be painful as king, *but it is brilliant as general!*'

On the day following that upon which he wrote these insolent and cruel words, which set at defiance every principle of justice, of good sense, of humanity, and even of fortune, he received the news that Dupont, far from taking the offensive, was about to make a retrograde movement. 'Dupont is about to be attacked, and obliged to beat a retreat. It is inconceivable!' (Aug. 1). Truly it was incomprehensible, with the mad illusions which he had persisted in maintaining to the last, in spite of the warnings of his servants, in spite of his brother's notes of alarm, in spite of the very evidence of the events themselves. He did not hear the sad truth until August 2. His heart of bronze was untouched even for a moment by the misfortunes of his companions in arms; his pride alone felt the blow. He found it impossible not to foresee its chief results. His prestige destroyed, Spain lost for a long time, perhaps for ever, hopes revived amongst his numerous enemies!—but instead of blaming his own blindness, he thought only of persecuting, disgracing, and striking the victims of his own want of foresight. In ruining Dupont he evinced the same rage that he had displayed towards Villeneuve. 'Read these documents,' he wrote to Clarke on August 3, 'and you will see that from the beginning of the world there never was anything so stupid, so silly, so cowardly. This justifies the Macks, the Hohenlohes, etc. I wish to know what tribunals are to try these generals, and what punishments the laws inflict on such a crime.' 'These cowards,' he wrote on another day, 'shall carry their heads to the

scaffold.' There was a great deal of affectation, however, in this anger, and sometimes he acted the part rather awkwardly, as may be seen by the burlesque phrase which he addressed to Davoust:—'Dupont has dishonoured our arms, he has shown as much incapacity as cowardice; when you hear it some day, *your hair will stand on end*' (August 23).

The disaster of Baylen necessitated the evacuation of Madrid, now uncovered on its southern side. Joseph was the first, on the 29th of July, hurriedly to quit that capital, which he had entered only eight days before. On the previous evening two thousand servants deserted the palace at the same moment, as if it were a plague-stricken spot.[1] The courtiers behaved like the servants; not one of them accompanying Joseph in his flight. The French army then retreated to the Ebro, its chiefs not considering the line of the Douro sufficiently strong, although Napoleon recommended it in the interests of the army in Portugal, which was then threatened equally with that in Spain. Verdier was obliged to raise the siege of Saragossa, after a fresh assault that proved as disastrous and as fruitless as all those that had preceded it. Joseph moved his head-quarters to Miranda, where Marshal Jourdan, whom he had long since asked Napoleon to send, soon came to join him, and our army remained on the Ebro extending its cantonments from Bilbao to Tudela in a strong defensive position that allowed it to wait for reinforcements and for the promised presence of the Emperor.

The month of August had not ended before a fresh check, almost as disastrous at that of Baylen, again tarnished the glory of the French arms. For upwards of a month there had been no news from the army in Portugal. This silence was not due solely to the Spanish insurrection, which had interrupted all communication between France and Lisbon, but was likewise caused by the revolt of the Portuguese population. Junot occupied but four or five strong positions in Portugal, when on the 1st of August there hove in sight at the mouth of the Mondejo the fleet con-

[1] Joseph to Napoleon, August 14.

veying the English army. It was commanded by a young general who had already distinguished himself in India by the firmness and wisdom of his military conduct, Sir Arthur Wellesley, so well known later by the name of Wellington. Sent for the purpose of supporting the Spanish insurrection, Wellesley had first appeared before Corunna, but the insurgents of Gallicia, like those of Andalusia, refused, even after their defeat at Rio Seco, all foreign aid. They would accept no help from England, except in money and ammunition. Wellesley, in consequence, selected as the theatre of his operations that narrow and rugged sea-coast of Portugal which he was ere long to convert into an impregnable intrenched camp, against which all Napoleon's power was doomed to prove ineffectual.

Having disembarked with 10,000 men, and being reinforced a few days afterwards by 4000 more, Wellesley hastened to take the offensive before the arrival of Sir Hew Dalrymple, who was to become commander-in-chief of the army when it should attain its full strength. Junot well understood the danger he would incur if he allowed the English to attack him in a town like Lisbon, containing three hundred thousand inhabitants all ready to revolt. He formed the very wise plan of advancing to meet the enemy, and of driving him back on the sea, before the arrival of his reinforcements. To carry out such a design, however, his whole combined forces would have been required. They still amounted to 29,000 men; but Junot was unable to effect their concentration in time. Nevertheless he persisted in retaining the greater number of the positions he still occupied. True, he recalled Kellerman from Sétubal, but he left garrisons in Elvas, Santarem, Almeida, Peniche, and Palmela, besides the one at Lisbon. Moreover, he exposed a detachment of five thousand men to the utmost peril under General Delaborde, whom he had ordered to watch the English. Attacked by Wellesley near Roliça, in a position which was far too advanced considering the number of his troops, Delaborde sustained the shock of an army three times more numerous than his own, and defended his ground inch by inch in the most intrepid manner. None

the less, however, was he obliged to retreat hurriedly, after a loss of five hundred men; and the campaign was opened by a check, which at all times is so discouraging to soldiers (August 15).[1]

Immediately after this combat Wellesley advanced to Vimiero, where he was joined by two new brigades, adding about 18,000 men to his forces. Junot had at length succeeded in collecting his principal corps; and his troops amounted to rather more than 13,000 men.[2] He had advanced on his side as far as Torres Vedras, facing the English positions. The moment had come for him to 'drive the English into the sea,' according to the programme so often traced out by Napoleon; they seemed to wish to render this task more easy to him by having encamped on the heights of Vimiero, backed by precipices that overhang the Atlantic. Wellesley had not chosen this position. His plan—a far better one—was to march straight along the sea-coast, so as to turn Junot's army by placing himself between it and Lisbon, in the neighbourhood of Mafra. But an order from his superior officer Sir Harry Burrard, second in command under General Dalrymple, who was just about to land, obliged him to wait at Vimiero for the arrival of another corps of 10,000 men, expected under General Moore. Happily for him the same reason urged Junot to attack him at once.

At early dawn on August 21 Junot commenced his movements, and towards seven o'clock on that morning attacked Wellesley's positions. General Delaborde, supported by Generals Loison and Thomière, rushed impetuously to the right of the English army, up the heights of Vimiero, which seemed to be comparatively bare of troops. The English had hardly any cavalry, but their infantry was

[1] Fay, *Histoire des Guerres de la Peninsule*, Tome iv. Wellington's despatch to Lord Castlereagh, August 17, 1808 (Despatches of the Duke of Wellington, vol. iv.)

[2] It is clearly impossible to follow French reports on this point, as they lower this figure to 9000, for reasons easy to guess. Wellington's report says that Junot had 'collected all his forces,' which is equally erroneous. Lord Londonderry is the historian who most nearly approaches the truth (*Story of the Peninsular War*).

solid and staunch. The well-directed fire of their numberless batteries made the assailants stop short, and soon threw them back in disorder down the slopes they had ascended. Our attack against their left being secondary, for that very reason was only feebly supported. It had been, in consequence, less successful, and the two generals who led it were disabled. Junot then brought forward his reserve, composed of choice troops and commanded by Kellerman, with the artillery under General Fay in support. Kellerman's grenadiers cleared the slopes at a run, and soon crowned the heights of Vimiero; but there they were received by a heavy fire that made them recoil; our artillery was dismounted before it could take up a position, and its colonel severely wounded; and finally our cavalry, rendered useless by the hilly nature of the ground, could afford no assistance beyond that of protecting the retreat of our battalions, as they were each in turn repulsed. Our attack failed on every point, and the English remained untouched in their position.

It was by that time mid-day, and we had lost 1800 men and thirty guns. The English had only 134 killed and 335 wounded.[1] Junot ordered the retreat, which the army effected without hindrance. Wellesley wished to pursue us, but he was no longer commander-in-chief, and Burrard, who had assumed the command immediately after the battle, did not allow him to follow up his victory. The absence of cavalry would doubtless have rendered pursuit difficult. On the following day, after having held a council of war, at which the impossibility of continuing the occupation of Portugal was admitted, Junot sent General Kellerman to the English camp to arrange its evacuation by the French. This decision was rendered the more necessary by the arrival of the expected English reinforcements. At length, after an armistice, and after long debates, which lasted for nearly ten days, the plenipotentiaries, on the 30th August, signed the convention of Cintra. The Russian squadron, which was blockaded in the port of Lisbon, and had frequently refused to second Junot, was also anxious to share

[1] Wellington's report to Burrard, August 21, 1808 (Despatches).

in the convention, and its admiral, Siniavine, succeeded in obtaining permission to remain in an English port as a *deposit*, until the conclusion of peace between the respective governments.

The convention of Cintra granted Junot's army the most unhoped-for conditions. Since the landing of Moore, it had, in fact, become possible to make him prisoner, if not to destroy him altogether. Defeated, disheartened, hemmed in by the Spanish and Portuguese insurrections, as well as by 30,000 first-rate troops, he would have found it difficult to escape the alternative of seeking death on a field of battle or of being made prisoner of war. Such indeed was Sir Arthur Wellesley's opinion, who grieved to see the army lose the fruit of its two victories.[1] But Junot's proud bearing, and the prestige of Napoleon's arms, which was still so powerful, had their influence upon Dalrymple and Burrard. They granted Junot a kind of capitulation, according to the terms of which the French army was to evacuate the whole of Portugal, but to retain their arms and baggage, without being made prisoners of war, the English government undertaking to convey them by sea to L'Orient and Rochefort. The convention of Cintra excited as deep discontent in England as it did in Portugal and Spain. Nevertheless it was carried out with the most perfect faith in the course of the month of September, and the British Cabinet contented itself with sending the three generals who were condemned by public opinion before a commission, which ended by acquitting them.[2]

At the same moment that Junot's troops were embarking for France, downcast by their prompt defeat, and uncertain what reception awaited them, an army was embarking for Spain, from the other extremity of Europe, animated by

[1] He gives his opinion thus in a letter to Lord Castlereagh, 'Ten days after the battle of the 21st we have not advanced farther, we are not even so far advanced as we could and ought to have been on the evening of the battle' (Despatches).

[2] They alleged in their justification the real difficulty of forcing conditions upon Junot, without cavalry, and also the advantage of an immediate evacuation of Portugal (Reports of the Board of Inquiry, Ann. Reg., 1808).

very different sentiments. Having survived a thousand dangers and now escaping in an almost miraculous manner, it was on its road to join the defenders of Spain, to conquer or to die with them. It was the army of Romana which Napoleon had treacherously drawn off to the shores of the Baltic, in order to diminish in so far the forces of the country which he wished to subdue. He had sent it first to Hamburg, but not considering it sufficiently far off from Spain even there, he had landed the greater portion of it on the island of Funen, belonging to Denmark, and where it was shut in between Bernadotte's army and the sea. But the ingenious precautions which might be expected to have rapidly killed soldiers unaccustomed to live in those frozen regions, brought about the discomforture of the Tyrant; for it was precisely the sea which enabled Romana to effect his escape. Having established communications with the commander of an English cruiser, he took possession of Nyborg and of Langeland, and on the 15th August set sail with 10,000 men; the other 8000 which composed his *corps d'armée* having failed to embark in time. This it was which Napoleon and his apologists have called '*the treason of Romana*'!

In one month, from the 15th July to the 20th August, Napoleon had experienced more checks than he had ever sustained during his whole career. Repulsed before Valencia and before Saragossa, crushed rather than beaten at Baylen and Vimiero, driven out of the whole Peninsula as far as the Ebro, he had beheld his arms disgraced in a country which had no organisation and no army, by a people whose military forces he utterly despised and whose whole territory he already occupied. That nation which he had completely enchained as it were by surprise had made a single movement, and all had crumbled at one blow. The stroke even reached the heart of the Empire; what was it in fact but a long series of surprises? This defeat, which ought to have been so painful to his pride, has been called an expiation.

Let us learn to think and to speak like men and not to mix adulation even with blame. Every idea of justice

is profaned by those who say that Napoleon was punished because he signally failed in one of the most wicked enterprises which a crowned villain ever endeavoured to carry out. No! the shedding of so much innocent blood, so many families sacrificed, so many mothers reduced to despair, so many inoffensive men driven for years to murder without scruple, so many crimes conceived, committed, and persisted in with such cool premeditation, are not so easily expiated; and the lengthened inactivity of St. Helena was in itself nothing but an insignificant punishment when compared with the enormity of the crime. Let us not name punishment when speaking of this man, or if we do, let us place him boldly in a rank superior to the rest of mankind, and in that case we shall only be doing justice to ourselves by thinking that we are beings of an inferior nature, made to be for ever the prey and the playthings of a few privileged monsters.

CHAPTER XV

EUROPE AFTER BAYLEN—THE INTERVIEW AT ERFURT

(*August–October* 1808)

THE news of the capitulations of Baylen and of Cintra produced an indescribable sensation throughout the whole of Europe. To understand this aright it is necessary to recollect the state of deep depression and discouragement into which so long a series of deceptions and successive defeats had plunged all those whose hopes of deliverance rested on the political and military combinations of different governments. Napoleon's star, obscured for a moment at Eylau, had reappeared brighter than ever, so that the most persevering had grown weary, and looked upon the struggle as ended. His colossal power, with its hand henceforth weighing heavily on the only kingdom which might have presented an obstacle to it, seemed to possess the properties of the inflexible laws of nature and history. The hopeless times of the Roman Empire were evidently returning: men could not but live, yet to do so they must resign themselves to being stifled, and renounce all idea of fighting against the force of circumstances.

In one day this dismal nightmare had vanished, and hope revived. The great lesson which Spain had just given to the world was the more striking from its being precisely the one of which Europe stood most in need. Here it was not the government but the nation which had done everything. Elsewhere all were disheartened and dejected, because cabinets had miserably failed in their efforts. But the Spanish revolution said to the people, 'Your salvation is in your own hands;' to individuals it said, 'Rely upon

yourselves alone and you will conquer;' and in support of its words it appealed to its works. What the coalition of all the European governments had been unable to effect during eight years of war, the Spanish revolution had accomplished in one campaign with a handful of insurgents. It had twice inflicted on those redoubted eagles the most bloody humiliation to which a French army had ever been subjected. The material results of this victory were great enough, for the invasion had by one blow been driven back to the foot of the Pyrenees; but its moral effect was incalculable.

The lesson needed no commentary. It shone like lightning amidst darkness, and all eyes saw it at the same moment. The charm was for ever broken; the weak point of the colossus was discovered; the conqueror of kings was not as yet the conqueror of the people; the side which had so often lost when playing against him might now recommence the game with hope of success. England resolved upon a close alliance with Spain. She brought subsidies, arms, and immense munitions of war to the insurgents. With unusual activity she pressed forward the organisation and embarkation of her troops, which are always so slow to move. She showed that she was determined to defend the soil of the Peninsula as if it were her own territory.

In Germany the rebound of the events in Spain caused throughout the land a kind of electric shock, which gave birth to what had never before existed, namely the *German Nation*. The great intellectual renaissance of Germany during the eighteenth century had, it is true, prepared the way by forming the moral individuality of the people, but it was amidst the throes of defeat and foreign occupation that this glorious birth took place, and that the word German country was pronounced for the first time in the world. All the old antagonism, all the superannuated feuds between Northern and Southern Germany, between the larger and smaller states, between the princes and the higher ranks of the ancient aristocracy, between the noble and the citizen, between the House of Austria and the House of Brandenburg, disappeared instantaneously to make way for one single sentiment—hatred of the French

yoke. The initiative belonged to no class in particular, it was universal and simultaneous. It was a professor of philosophy, Moritz Arndt, who founded the *Tugendbund*, that *association of virtue* in which artisans and mighty nobles, soldiers and citizens, alike enrolled themselves. Experience had proved that the habits and the nature of the country were eminently unfavourable to party warfare. Even the intrepid Major Schill had been obliged to admit this truth after his unfortunate, though heroic, efforts to organise an insurrection in Prussia during the campaign in Poland. The French occupation, moreover, owing to the Confederation of the Rhine and the enormous number of our troops, was far more deeply rooted in Germany than in the Peninsula. That great national insurrection, therefore, was obliged to act in an underhand manner, and to disguise itself under the form of secret societies.

The organisation of the *Tugendbund* very much resembled that adopted later by the *Carbonari*. A central committee, at a distance and beyond the reach of the Imperial Police, directed the affairs of the association, which then branched off into a multiplicity of private committees. The provincial committees had no intercommunication, so that the discovery of one in no degree endangered the safety of the others. The association was thus gradually propagated even in the provinces of the Confederation of the Rhine, and it silently prepared its forces, awaiting the hour of a national rising. The highest as well as the lowest were proud of being affiliated to it. Hardenburg and Scharnhorst, formerly ministers, Generals Blücher and Gneisenau, the duke of Brunswick-Œls, Major Schill, Doctor Jahn, were its most active members. Before long the soil of ancient Germany was covered with similar associations, grafted on to this head institution. The governments being forced, as all private individuals were, to dissimulate, and to make use of none but secret and evasive measures, thoroughly seconded this vast conspiracy. It was served by two ministers whose firmness of character was only equalled by their superior intellect; in Prussia by the Baron von Stein, in Austria by Count Stadion.

Baron von Stein seems to have been the first amongst his countrymen who saw that nothing could save Germany but a great national rising. At all events, no one will deprive him of the honour of having promoted it in the boldest, the most persevering, and the most skilful manner. This great minister was even more, a great citizen. He felt that in order effectively to stir up the popular masses, which hitherto had been denied all share in the great interests of the country, it was necessary to bring them into public life. He felt that patriots cannot be made out of men bound down to the soil, and that this unique occasion must be made use of, in order to impose upon the nobility the sacrifice of their chief privileges. He desired, therefore, that the prelude to the war of independence should be the emancipation of the lower orders in Prussia. With free men alone would he conquer Napoleon's despotism. He effaced the last vestiges of serfdom from the Prussian legislation, and turned the peasant into a citizen. He abolished feudal service, authorised the large proprietors to divide their estates, gave the *communes* the right of self-administration by allowing them to choose their own municipal councils, and in this way transformed them into so many small centres full of life, activity, and civic emulation. He granted the middle class the right of acquiring landed property, which had hitherto been the exclusive privilege of the nobles, and threw open the industrial and commercial professions to the latter, although this tolerance, it must be added, was hateful to them, as being a sign of equality. Such was the object of the three Memel decrees, dated in the months of October and November 1807, and owing to which Prussia had become a nation. And all these reforms, which were equivalent to a revolution, were effected by him without either noise, or show, or any of those popular rewards so dear to vulgar tribunes.

At the same time that he boldly abolished these old abuses, Stein obstinately resisted our exactions in the assessment of war contributions; a matter the settlement of which Napoleon purposely delayed in order to have a pretext for continuing the occupation of the Prussian terri-

tory. He organised a silent and passive resistance against the French administration in Prussia, which vanished when it was complained of, but which, making itself felt always and everywhere, paralysed all our measures. The management of this singular conspiracy was all the more easy from the administrators themselves being its instruments; for Napoleon, when confiding the administration of Prussia to his representative Daru, had been obliged to retain the greater number of the old Prussian officials. Daru's orders were never disputed, but they were not carried out, or they were carried out in a contrary sense, on the pretence of having been misunderstood. Hence arose incessant squabbles, ever-recurring difficulties, which deeply irritated the Prussian population, already exasperated by the crushing burdens that had been imposed upon them.[1]

Nor did Von Stein's sphere of action confine itself to Prussia. He successfully strove to extend it over the whole of Germany, and especially over those provinces which were allied to the French Empire: 'The exasperation in Germany increases daily,' he wrote, on the 15th of August 1808, to Prince Sagn Wittgenstein, then at the baths in Mecklenburg. 'It must be encouraged and stimulated. I should much like to have correspondents established in Hesse and Westphalia, that they should make preparation there for certain events, and seek to establish intercourse there with men of energy and good will. . . . *The affairs of Spain are making a profound impression. They prove what ought long since to have been foreseen.* It would be very useful to spread the news in a prudent manner.' This significant letter was seized at Spandau on M. de Koppe, and instantly transmitted to Napoleon by Marshal Soult. Although it lifted only one corner of the veil, it said enough to enlighten the Emperor on the gravity of the events that were being prepared in Germany. But, inflated with pride and completely absorbed in his designs of revenging himself on Spain by the infliction of exemplary punishment, he regarded Stein's letter only as a motive for peremptorily

[1] *Mémoires tirés des papiers d'un homme d'état* (Hardenburg). Schoell: *Histoire abr. des Traités.*

cutting short the objections of Prussia to his pecuniary demands, and forcing King Frederic William to dismiss his minister. Obliged to make a retrograde step for the purpose of concentrating all his forces against Spain, he took advantage of this incident to effect this retreat in the most favourable manner possible. He made use of the letter, therefore, but despised the warning it contained. He had it printed in the *Moniteur*[1] with these few words of comment: 'The king of Prussia may be pitied for having ministers *who are as unskilful as they are perverse.*' This short sentence was the death-warrant of Stein's administration. The great patriot retired, that he might not implicate his country; but his plans and his reforms none the less constituted the life and soul of the Prussian government, and therein lay the danger. 'I have demanded,' wrote Napoleon to Soult, on September 10, 'that Stein be expelled from the ministry; otherwise the king of Prussia shall not re-enter possession of his states. I have placed his property in Westphalia under sequestration.'

Like every other satisfaction which he demanded at this critical moment, this was also granted to him; but the very facility with which he obtained it ought to have shown him that other means were relied upon, secret it might be, but certain, whereby revenge could be taken later. Prince William of Prussia had been in Paris during several months past for the definitive settlement of the Prussian debt. Champagny signified to him in Napoleon's name that he must at once accept the sum of one hundred and forty millions fixed by the Emperor. The prince was obliged at the same time to submit to the hard conditions imposed upon his king. The convention, fixing the amount of the debt, stipulated that ten thousand French troops should continue to occupy the fortresses of Glogau, Stettin, and Cüstrin until it were fully paid off; that they should be maintained, if not paid, by the king of Prussia; that the Prussian army should be reduced to *forty-two thousand men* for ten years, the king not being allowed under any circumstances to make good its deficiency by raising the militia

[1] *Moniteur* of September 8, 1808.

(separate Articles, I. and III.). Lastly, King Frederic William bound himself, in case of war against Austria, to place a division of sixteen thousand men at Napoleon's disposal.[1]

Such were the first-fruits of Stein's policy. But his defeat was more apparent than real, as a main feature of his plans was to push everything to extremes, and he relied more upon the despair which an excess of evil would produce than upon the petty ingenuity of the policy of cabinets. So cruel an abuse of force could only serve his purposes in the end, for, in the intolerable position thus created for them, the monarchy and the Prussian people could henceforth only live in a permanent state of conspiracy. They had been obliged to submit to the treaty, but they evaded it. The Minister of War, Scharnhorst, carried out all the reforms in the military departments which his friend Stein had introduced into the civil order. He admitted the middle classes to superior grades in the army; and, whilst ostensibly maintaining it at the figure of 42,000 men, had in reality 200,000, thanks to a kind of rapid rotation by which soldiers remained in a regiment only just long enough to receive instruction.

In Austria Count Stadion, obliged to treat an all-powerful aristocracy and an influential clergy with respect, was unable to undertake great popular reforms. Moreover, he had no strong and serious-minded population to lean upon, like that of Northern Germany. But, if he had to adopt less radical measures, he worked with no less energy in furtherance of the common cause. The Austrian army had been thoroughly reorganised by the Archduke Charles, who was constantly exercising it. The active army of 300,000 men had lately received the addition of a reserve numbering nearly 100,000. Nay more: Stadion had decreed throughout the whole extent of the empire the establishment of a national militia, and almost the entire able-bodied population had come forward to enrol themselves in it with extraordinary enthusiasm and without distinction of class. Free gifts flowed into the public treasury.

[1] Convention of September 8, 1808. De Clercq, *Recueil des traités*.

In short, for the first time a patriotic movement was produced in that artificial empire, which has never been a country. Austria becoming a nation through hatred and fear of foreign domination, Austria appealing to public opinion through the eloquent pen of Gentz, Austria become the champion of the right of nations and of European liberty—such a phenomenon in itself condemned Napoleon's policy. It told how inverted the *rôles* had become in Europe since the great days of the French Revolution, and how far removed was the pretended heir of the men of '89 from the principles which had inspired them!

The armaments of Austria could not fail to attract the attention of the Emperor of the French; for, whilst arrogating to himself the right of having 800,000 men under arms, Napoleon was by no means inclined to tolerate anything of the kind on the part of a foreign power. On the 16th July Champagny, taking advantage of some pretended violence to French subjects, questioned Prince Metternich as to the intentions of his government. A few days later he renewed his questions as to the armaments in a tone of extreme bitterness. 'What does your government mean? Why should it disturb the peace of the Continent? Your princes traverse your provinces; they call the people to the defence of the country. The whole population from eighteen to forty-five has been placed under arms. . . . Your people are frightened, your neighbours alarmed. Every one is asking, "What does Austria mean? What danger threatens her? . . ." etc.'[1] Metternich's reply, dated July 22, 1808, was clear and unanswerable. All the states, neighbours of Austria, Italy, Bavaria, Westphalia, and even the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, had changed their military systems and adopted the French conscription. Austria could not remain behindhand without compromising the safety of her people; she therefore imitated her neighbours by effecting a transformation analogous to that which they had accomplished. Her reserve and her national guard were institutions she had only borrowed from France,

[1] Documents communicated to the Senate in the sitting of April 14, 1809. No. III. *Arch. parl.*

in order to place herself on a footing of equality with the other states of Europe. What were called her armaments had no other meaning.[1] To this embarrassing reply Champagny answered by touching on different matters discussed at Teplitz and Carlsbad. He asserted that two couriers had been arrested on their way to Dalmatia; an arrest which afterwards was to be transformed into an *assassination* in Napoleon's manifestoes; then, finally, he offered to raise the camps in Silesia,—a measure which the French government had decided upon *in any case*, in consequence of the events in Spain. But he did not offer the only measure which would have been conclusive, namely, the reduction of the French and allied armies, in proportion to the reduction he wished to obtain from Austria.[2] Henceforth Napoleon's exactions could alone be regarded as acts of diplomatic violence.

That, however, was the precise character he wished to give them. He quickly understood, that, from the point of view of international law, he could not force Austria out of the purely defensive position she had chosen. Determined, at the same time, to drive her out of it by war, yet not wishing to undertake that war until he had subdued Spain, he resolved to gain time by menaces and intimidation; both of which means were efficacious enough against a power whose preparations were still far from complete. No sooner had he returned to Paris from his journey through the south and west of France (August 14, 1808) than Napoleon took up the dialogue with Metternich at the point where Champagny had left it off. On the 15th August, in the midst of a solemn audience given to the great bodies of the State, and to the members of the diplomatic corps, the Emperor personally apostrophised the Austrian ambassador. In presence of the astonished assembly he indulged in one of those violent outbursts that had become so celebrated since his interview with Lord Whitworth. He took advantage of the reserve which his

[1] Documents communicated to the Senate in the sitting of April 14, 1809. No. V.

[2] *Ibid.* Champagny to Metternich, July 30, 1808.

position imposed on the ambassador, in order to assail him at his ease with undignified invectives and with questions which he allowed him no time to answer:

'Does Austria then wish to make war upon us, or does she want to frighten us? . . . Who is attacking you that you should thus think of defending yourself? . . . Is not everything around you peaceful? Since the peace of Presburg, has there been the slightest difference between you and me? You are calling the people to the defence of the country; you are increasing your regiments to 1300 men. You have 14,000 artillery horses, you are arming your fortresses, and yet your exchange which was already so low has fallen still lower! Do not say that you are obliged to provide for your safety, you know I ask nothing from you. I have encamped my troops in order to let them draw breath; they are encamped not in France, but in foreign countries, *because it is less expensive.* But if you arm, I will arm. I will raise 200,000 men if necessary. You will find no continental power to join you. The emperor of Russia himself will request you to remain quiet. Your emperor can have no ill-feeling against me. I occupied his capital, and the greater part of his provinces, but all was given back to him. I even kept Venice only to leave fewer subjects of discord. But war will take place whether you or I like it. Your people are roused, and have committed acts of violence, because they place more faith in your measures than in your proclamations in favour of peace. *Hence the assassination of three of my couriers on their way to Dalmatia.* A few more such insults and war will become inevitable, *for they may kill us, but they shall not insult us with impunity.* . . . You say that you have an army of 400,000 men. You wish to double it. To follow your example *it will soon be necessary to arm even the women!* In such a state of things war will become desirable in order to bring about a solution. An evil, severe but short, is far better than prolonged suffering.'[1]

Such in brief was this incoherent and undignified sally, according to Champagny's report to General Andréossy, in

[1] Champagny to Andréossy, August 16, 1808.

which all its more violent expressions were carefully omitted. It left out, on one side, all the real difficulties of the situation of the two countries; it evaded all serious discussion on the part of Metternich; it was full of compromising avowals, of false and wounding allegations; but above all it possessed in the highest degree the tone and character which Napoleon wished to give it, namely, that of a public menace. The most astounding feature of this long diatribe was, undeniably, the reproach of ingratitude addressed to the emperor of Austria! Napoleon in conclusion demanded that Austria should countermand her armaments and recognise Joseph as king of Spain. Finding it impossible to take up the gauntlet at once, the cabinet of Vienna temporised and made vague promises, yet never for an instant suspended its preparations, so that Napoleon succeeded but very imperfectly in his attempt at intimidation.

Nor did the Emperor succeed any better with a court which he had humbled to the last degree and which he had hitherto always subdued through fear. The Holy See, ordinarily so hostile to the most legitimate insurrections, was more alive than perhaps any other European court to the success of that in Spain. It may be said with truth that it had individually more grievances against Napoleon than all the other cabinets together. After Cardinal de Bayanne's useless mission, Napoleon had seized the Papal States, whilst disguising them under the singular titles of departments of the *Metauro*, of the *Musone*, and of the *Tronto*,—denominations which he selected purposely in order to efface old associations, and in the belief that under these names no one would recognise the Roman States. He had then quietly taken possession of Rome (Feb. 2, 1808), where General Miollis instantly laid hands on all the public offices, and governed the Eternal City like a common *préfecture*. The Pope had protested against the occupation of his capital; but, although this protest was made with true evangelical sweetness, Napoleon's only reply was to remove the advisers who, he said, were leading His Holiness astray. He made his gensdarmes seize all the Cardinals who were not Roman subjects by birth, and,

taking them out of Rome, conduct them across the frontier. He incorporated the soldiers of the Pope's army amongst his own troops, making them promise that 'they would no longer be led by[1] priests;' an honour for which these unfortunate men had to pay dearly. These acts of violence were crowned by the occupation of the Quirinal, and Pius VII. saw himself not only despoiled of all the prerogatives of royalty, but watched like a prisoner beneath his own roof (April 7, 1808).

Nevertheless, just as he was about to embark in the contest with Spain, Napoleon perceived, though according to his custom rather late, that he had undertaken too much at a time, and that his quarrels with the court of Rome might seriously injure his projects against Spain. On April 18, 1808, he wrote to Prince Eugène: 'My son! I am immensely occupied; on that account I desire that the Roman affairs be postponed until the 10th May; meanwhile have the four legations governed temporarily in the manner I have ordered. One must not undertake everything at[2] once.' The adjournment thus proposed was that of the publication of the decree in which he declared that he revoked 'the donation of Charlemagne, *his illustrious predecessor*,' in regard to the provinces of Urbino, Ancona, Macerata, and Camerino. The counter-order arrived too late, for Miollis had not only published the decree, but had seized, in the very palace of the Holy Father, his Secretary of State, Gabrielli. Between the Papacy and the Empire it was henceforth to be war to the knife. An explosion might be prevented, the noise might be stifled by intimidation, silence, or mystery, but its progress could not be arrested, and it would be carried on without truce and without intermission until one of the two combatants should fall.

It is easy to imagine the impression which, in such a state of things, the news of our reverses in Spain made upon the Roman Court. It produced a most comforting effect on the Vatican. The protests of the Holy See,

[1] Order of the day of General Miollis, May 27, 1808.
[2] *Mémoires* of Prince Eugène, v. 4.

hitherto so timid, instantly acquired a haughty and bitter tone, at which Cardinal Pacca, who signed them in his character of successor to Gabrielli, admits in his memoirs that he was somewhat shocked. From the month of August 1808 each act of the French administration in the Roman States became a fresh occasion for the publication of vehement manifestoes, which were placarded on the walls of Rome by invisible agents. The more Napoleon sought to allay hostilities, to beguile his adversaries, and to avoid new subjects of dispute, the more Pius VII. raised his voice, and endeavoured to attract the attention of Europe, still heedless and indifferent. Our reverses, it is true, were not serious enough to permit the Holy Father to have recourse to extreme measures; but he began to prepare his spiritual weapons; he kept them in good order; in the silence of his cabinet he examined and affectionately handled a bull of excommunication which long since had been ready, and which he proposed to launch against Napoleon at the first opportune moment.[1]

The general situation of the Continent, apparently without cause for alarm at the moment, might yet become most dangerous, once Napoleon were engaged with his best troops in Spain. Though unconscious of the most disquieting symptoms in the actual state of affairs, he nevertheless at once perceived the necessity of taking precautions, by lowering his pretensions, and this time especially seriously obtaining the support of Russia. He must either renounce Spain, which his pride did not permit, or else show himself to Europe with forces of such a description as would quell all desire of troubling our operations in the Peninsula. The alliance with Alexander was, at all times, the most certain method of restraining the European powers. Unfortunately, the disappointment which the Czar had experienced after the treaty of Tilsit had not contributed to give him confidence in Napoleon. For a certain time the latter had succeeded in occupying Alexander's imagination with fantastic plans for the partition of Turkey and an expedition to India; but of all the

[1] Memoirs of Cardinal Pacca.

possessions promised him Finland alone had been given. This acquisition, forcibly taken from the States of a relative and ally exhausted by labour in the common cause, was not approved of in Russia, where for a long time past nothing had been feared from the neighbourhood of Sweden. The Czar's intimacy with Napoleon had always been unpopular amongst his own subjects; since the deceptions of Tilsit it had become hateful to them, and they spoke loudly at St. Petersburg of the possibility of having recourse to the *great Asiatic remedy*—a sovereign method already applied to Paul I. and many of his predecessors.[1]

Napoleon's relations with the court of Russia, at one time very formal, became far more amicable, according as Spanish affairs grew complicated. After the capitulation of Baylen they became positively affectionate. The Czar was too clear-sighted not to understand the meaning of this gradation. He quickly understood that the more difficulties Napoleon might create for himself in Spain, the more would he be forced to make concessions to Russia. Most characteristic it truly was, and condemnatory of this much-vaunted alliance, that our ally was obliged to calculate on our reverses! Far, then, from objecting in the slightest degree to the enterprises of his great friend, Alexander perpetually spoke of them to Caulaincourt as matters that were most natural and legitimate. Having done so much to disown the past and abandon the cause he had served, he had no alternative but to persevere in order to reap the benefit of his conduct. He therefore, with a pleasure that is easy to understand, beheld embarrassments springing up and increasing, which would render his position all the stronger. So early as the middle of March, Napoleon, anxious to calm the impatience of Russia, declared to Tolstoï that he was disposed to satisfy her on every point, to evacuate Russia, to quiet the Poles, and to settle the affairs of the East; but that he desired first to have a fresh interview with the Czar, at which all these questions would be definitively arranged.

[1] *Correspondance diplomatique* of Comte de Maistre.

After the affair of Baylen these demonstrations of friendship assumed a tone of tenderness. Napoleon grew impatient to see Alexander, to press him to his heart, to efface all recollections of temporary misunderstandings. How far removed he now is from the project of keeping Silesia as an equivalent for the principalities, which he formerly considered such a natural arrangement! There can be no question of that to-day, nor of that empty scarecrow of Polish independence. The *rôles* are changed. Alexander no longer solicits, as at Tilsit; he can make his own conditions and, if need be, impose them. So completely is he master of the situation, that even Austria offers him those provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia for which Napoleon so long encouraged him to hope. The Russian alliance, which at Tilsit had only been an arrangement to flatter Napoleon's ambition, had now become a necessity to him. Each side felt this; hence the two sovereigns were equally impatient to meet again; the one to strengthen an alliance so indispensable to the success of his plans, the other to derive from it all the promised advantages. It was settled, therefore, that the desired interview should take place at Erfurt towards the end of September 1808.

To satisfy Russian ambition, to obtain, by means of this powerful aid, a few months tranquillity in Europe, which would enable him to crush for ever the Spanish insurrection, such was the new plan to which Napoleon devoted himself with habitual activity, and in which he had every chance of succeeding, owing to the enmities he had contrived to sow amongst the chiefs of the old European coalition. Divided through his influence, as the chiefs of the confederacy of Gaul had been by Cæsar, they would have met with the same fate, had not the Spanish people, like a new actor, appeared on the scene and thrown its sword into the balance. On Spain alone did the destiny of Europe depend at this moment, and against Spain Napoleon was about to direct all his efforts. Freed from Prussia by the treaty of September 8, freed at least momentarily from Austria by the Russian alliance, he led towards the Pyrenees the principal corps of that immense army which occupied

Germany. At other periods of his career he had accomplished great deeds with small means,—to-day he requires a more rapid method, one more suited to strike the imagination of mankind. It is not a campaign of Italy that he is preparing against Spain, but an expedition in the style of Xerxes. He desires to appear there as an exterminator armed with thunder, or a god anxious to avenge his offended majesty.

On the 5th September 1808 his ministers, Champagny and Clarke, presented themselves in his name before the Senate. Champagny, as Minister for Foreign Affairs, communicated to this assembly the treaties concluded at Bayonne with the dispossessed princes of Spain. These famous documents of sad memory were accompanied by two equally extraordinary reports from the same minister in support of the usurpation of the Spanish throne. In the first of these, antedated the 24th April, Champagny, after having stated all the motives which imposed upon Napoleon the duty of *regenerating* Spain, and of 'recommencing the work of Louis XIV.,' laid down the bold axiom—which produced in Europe what in our days is called a prolonged sensation,—namely, that '*what policy advises, justice authorises.*' He insisted upon the obligation of putting an end to quarrels, which had been so cleverly fomented between father and son; the necessity of avenging the cause of the sovereigns, of not allowing an insult to the majesty of thrones to go unpunished, of not abandoning Spain to the avidity of England. 'Will your Majesty,' said this worthy minister, 'allow this new prey to be devoured by England?' There was no danger that Napoleon would let others perform a task which he so well knew how to perform himself.

The second report, dated September 1, was a short statement of acts of monstrous ingratitude by which the Spaniards had responded to the benevolent intentions of the Emperor. The *corrupting gold* of England, the passions of *the Spanish populace*, the influence of the *monks*, the *intrigues of the agents of the Inquisition who dreaded reform*, had disappointed hopes that were so just and generous.

'But,' it added, 'would Napoleon allow England to say, Spain is one of my provinces?—never! To prevent such shame and misfortune two millions of brave soldiers are ready, if necessary, to cross the Pyrenees.'

Clarke's mission was to prove to the Senate that these last words were no empty metaphor. His report began by stating 'that France never had had a larger or finer army,' and, in consequence of this assertion he concluded by demanding from the Senate, not an ordinary conscription of eighty thousand men, but a levy of *one hundred and sixty thousand.* This exorbitant levy was no longer one year, but sixteen months in advance, and struck at one blow both the young men who, according to rule, ought not to have been called out until 1810, and those older ones who had escaped the preceding conscriptions, then considered so onerous. 'And is there anything extraordinary,' said Clarke, 'in the fact that the immense population of France should afford the spectacle of a million of armed men, ready to punish England?' Really extraordinary was the fact that this million of men were armed for a cause not their own, and allowed themselves to be marked like a flock of sheep sent to the slaughter-house. It had been said of the Revolution that, like Saturn, it devoured its children, but what were the sacrifices of the Reign of Terror compared to this fearful holocaust consummated in cold blood, with the tranquil self-complacency of a reaper mowing down his corn?

The author of these homicidal measures himself addressed a message to the Senate, the better to make them feel the necessity of obedience. 'He imposed these fresh sacrifices upon his people *with confidence* . . . they were necessary in order to spare them greater ones, and to lead to the grand result of general peace.' Every war under the Empire was the last war; as under the Reign of Terror every proscription was the last proscription. 'Frenchmen!' added Napoleon, 'my plans have only one end in view, *your happiness and the security of your children.* . . . You have so often told me *that you love me!* I shall estimate the truth of your sentiments by the zeal you show in

seconding plans so nearly affecting your own dearest interests, the honour of the Empire, and *my glory!*' It would not have been easy to prove how these interests, this honour, this glory, could consist in covering the Spanish Peninsula with bloodshed and ruin. If France really did love Napoleon, she was cruelly rewarded; and strange were the proofs of love which his tender soul demanded.

Lacépède was again, on this occasion, interpreter of the feelings of the Senate. 'Anarchy,' he said, 'that blind and ferocious monster, from which Napoleon's genius has delivered France,—has now lighted her torches and raised her scaffolds in the middle of Spain! England has hastened to send her armies thither and to unite her standard with the hideous ensigns of the satellites of Terror. . . . But the Emperor's arm shall liberate the Spaniards. . . . Ah! how the royal spirits of Louis XIV., of Francis I., and of the Great Henry must be consoled by Napoleon's generous resolve. . . . The French will respond to his sacred voice. He asks for a new pledge of their love. With what ardour they will run to him!'[1]

Such was the tone of the period. I shall not stop to discuss the possible sincerity of such language. It is at least doubtful whether true sentiments could ever have been thus expressed. It is more interesting and more useful to inquire how and why this language deluded Napoleon's contemporaries, for one is obliged to admit that it must have made a certain impression on them, when the highest body in the State could have used it. This style, then so much in vogue, was only a new application of that taste for theatrical declamation, which, at all times, has been the shame and the scourge of our nation, but which especially marked the decline of the French Revolution. For Napoleon substitute 'the people,' and you will find a thousand examples of Lacépède's harangue in the period which preceded the French Empire. The flatterers had changed masters, but the flattery remained what it had been—pretentious, pompous, and low. Napoleon, from the outset

[1] Speech of Count Lacépède in the sitting of September 10, 1808. *Archives parlementaires.*

of his career, understood perfectly how much this false rhetoric favoured his false grandeur, and for this reason he preached and encouraged it by example. The affectation was general; from high to low every one declaimed; those in command as well as those who obeyed, and the style rapidly fell to the last point of degradation, although on that account, perhaps, it became more popular. One is justified in affirming as matter of history, that the arts and manners of the Empire powerfully strengthened this inclination, which weakened the simplicity of the national mind, debased our forms of oratory, and has at length made our people the certain prey of the most miserable political *charlatans*.

The hundred and sixty thousand men of the new levy were destined to replace those old troops on the Rhine which Napoleon withdrew from the depths of Germany in order to send them to the Pyrenees. He left, it is true, twenty thousand in reserve, not considering the circumstances sufficiently urgent to recall them all.[1] Independently of the sixty thousand men who remained on the Ebro with King Joseph, and of the fifteen to twenty thousand that occupied the fortified towns in Catalonia, he intended to bring into Spain two hundred thousand soldiers who had gone through the wars in the north, so as to crush the rebellion by one blow. He calculated that, even after this deduction, he would still have 200,000 French in Germany under the orders of Marshal Davout and Bernadotte, 100,000 men of the contingents from the Confederation of the Rhine, and finally, another 100,000 men on the Isonzo, under Prince Eugène; that is to say, a total force of 400,000 soldiers to keep Austria in check.[2] The great army (*la grand armée*) was consequently broken up and reorganised under the name of the Army of the Rhine. The army of Spain was first divided into six, then definitively into eight corps, the command of which he gave to his best lieutenants, Ney, Lannes, Soult, Victor, Saint-Cyr, Lefebvre, Mortier, and Junot. He then incorporated amongst his

[1] Napoleon to Lacuée, September 10, 1808.

[2] Napoleon to Jérôme, September 7; to Soult, September 10.

own troops several regiments composed of Italians, of Poles, of Dutch, and of Germans, forcing these people, while regretting the liberty they had lost, to fight for the enslavement of the only nation whose example they ought to have imitated.

All these soldiers, who had so often been told that their victories on the Niemen had brought about peace, and yet were so soon again called upon to fight for it anew on the Guadalquivir, might perhaps perceive that their credulity was somewhat abused; they might tire of promenades, at once so glorious and so fearfully sanguinary, and of promises perpetually evaded; of a never-ending task accomplished with so much difficulty. It was necessary therefore, to prevent dangerous reflections on their part, to dazzle them, to blind them to their position, to lead them to slaughter in Spain as to a festival. Napoleon, consequently, had a magnificent reception prepared for them in the towns through which they passed between the Rhine and the Pyrenees; and as the municipalities were not rich enough to incur the expense, he indemnified them at the rate of three francs per man: 'Addresses, verses, theatrical representations gratis, dinners,—such,' he wrote to the Minister of the Interior 'is what I expect from the citizens for the soldiers on their return as conquerors.'[1] At Metz, Nancy, Reims, Paris, Tours, Bourges, and Bourdeaux, the heroes of the *grand armée* were received with noisy *fêtes*, which, however, did not succeed in making them entirely forget that they were like passing guests who are made to enter by one door and instantly have to leave by the other. Napoleon at least seems to have been of this opinion, for our soldiers had not gone half-way on their route when he wrote again to Cretet to advise him to have '*songs* composed in Paris,' for the purpose of reviving enthusiasm. But on what subjects were these songs to be written? On tyrants? No evil should any more be said of them. On the country? Every one knew it was not in danger. Perfidious Albion was a worn-out theme. 'They must treat,' said the Emperor, 'of *the liberty* . . . of the Sea!'[2] The liberty

[1] Napoleon to Cretet, September 3, 1808.
[2] *Ibid.*, September 17, 1808.

of the sea! what an irresistible stimulant for the poet's imagination and for the soldier's heroism! 'You must have three kinds of songs made,' he added, 'so that the soldier may not hear the same thing sung twice.' In real life, as on the stage, it is never desirable too closely to examine the hidden springs by means of which grand transformations of scenery are produced, lest in so doing we shall exaggerate their importance; but this admission once made, one must confess that more wretched machinery never set in motion more paltry stage-scenery.

The Emperor Alexander had already started for Erfurt, accompanied only by some high functionaries of his court, his brother the Grand-Duke Constantine amongst the number, and his minister old Romanzoff, almost the only partisan whom the French alliance could boast in Russia. Alexander had quitted St. Petersburg amid the extreme displeasure of his subjects, still most hostile to his new policy, and in spite of his mother's entreaties who felt excessively alarmed at this journey. There is no doubt that the termination of the interview at Bayonne was not calculated to inspire Alexander with unmixed confidence, but his position was far from being the same as that of the king of Spain. By seizing Ferdinand's person, Napoleon might have thought, with a certain amount of plausibility, that he was by that one stroke seizing his kingdom; but a similar delusion was impossible with regard to Russia. The essay, moreover, had too signally failed to induce him to try it a second time.

It is always dangerous and often puerile to desire to interpret the secret sentiments of historical personages. But if the experience of mankind and the circumstances of his position affected Alexander as they ordinarily would other men, it is allowable to believe that he brought with him to this interview but meagre sympathy for his august ally. Seduced by the promises made at Tilsit, he had sacrificed to Napoleon the generous illusions of his youth, his popularity in Europe, and the almost superstitious attachment of his subjects; he had sacrificed to him his own self-respect; and yet, even after these sacrifices, the promises

had not been kept. He had received from him only one present, of a description for which no one is grateful, because it must be accepted with a blush,—Finland, taken from a relative. And if Napoleon now seemed more disposed to fulfil his engagements, Alexander knew to what accident he owed this unhoped-for civility; his courtiers themselves did not hesitate to speak of it. 'The Emperor Alexander has had many churches built,' said Tolstoï, the ambassador, to his brother, Count Nicholas; 'advise him to have one built to *Notre Dame del soccorro d'Espagne.*'[1]

Spain, most certainly, was the sole cause of the revival of friendship shown by Napoleon to the Czar. The affairs he had to arrange with Alexander could have been as well settled in Paris as at Erfurt, and by correspondence as well as by an interview. What the two sovereigns had to say to each other in no way necessitated a personal meeting; their feelings could not be of a very friendly nature after so many reciprocal misunderstandings. Napoleon made up his mind beforehand to satisfy his ally, by giving him the two principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, which had been the cause of their mutual coldness; he was not a man to modify his plans under the influence of a conversation. Moreover, he could not hide from himself that his position with regard to Alexander was far from being so favourable as at Tilsit. His prestige, at that time perfect, had sensibly diminished since. His armies, then deemed invincible, had experienced checks as humiliating as they were disastrous. These were strong reasons for avoiding an interview, which could not fail to rouse reflections on the past.

But necessity spoke more loudly than pride. After the immense retrograde movement which he had executed with his troops from the Oder to the Rhine, and on the eve of an expedition into Spain, he felt it necessary to obtain at any cost a manifestation of such a nature as might intimidate Europe; and to produce this result, it did not suffice, in his opinion, to make the Franco-Russian alliance publicly known, but he desired to make a parade of his intimacy with Alex-

[1] Comte de Maistre: *Correspondance diplomatique.*

ander in some manner that would strike all minds. He even thought of asking him for one of his sisters in marriage, so that this friendship might appear indissoluble. This admirable master of stage effect had therefore deliberately overcome his repugnances, in order to give Europe a grand representation. But the advantages to be derived from the interview at Erfurt consisted solely in the value of opinion, which after all is very transitory. In reality, Napoleon had to undertake all the trouble of the business, and although he received little more than moral support in exchange for the most substantial concessions, he seemed at Erfurt almost as if indebted to the sovereign of whom at Tilsit he had been the protector.

The two Emperors met on the 27th of September, on the road between Weimar and Erfurt. They embraced each other with that air of perfect cordiality of which kings alone possess the secret, especially when their intention is rather to stifle than to embrace. They made their entry into the town on horseback together, amidst an immense concourse of people. Napoleon had wished by its magnificence to render the reception worthy of the illustrious guests who had agreed to meet at Erfurt. He had sent thither from the storehouses of the crown, bronzes, porcelain, the richest hangings, and the most sumptuous furniture. He desired that the *Comédie-Française* should heighten the brilliant effects of these *fêtes* by performing the chief masterpieces of our stage, from *Cinna* down to *La Mort de César*, before this royal audience. The day was passed in promenades, in military manœuvres, in the chase on a large scale in the Saxon forests. In the evening Alexander dined with Napoleon, and they then proceeded to the theatre, there to hear Corneille, Racine, and Voltaire acted by Talma and Mdlle. Duchesnois. The evening terminated with the Emperor of Russia.

All the natural adherents of Napoleon hastened to answer his appeal by flocking to Erfurt, for he did not lose sight of his principal object, and his desire was to appear before Europe surrounded by a court composed of kings. In this cortege were to be seen those of Bavaria, of Wurtemburg,

of Saxony, of Westphalia, and Prince William of Prussia; and beside these stars of first magnitude twinkled the obscure Pleiades of the Rhenish Confederation. The reunion, almost exclusively German, was meant to prove to German idealists the vanity of their dreams. Were not all present who had any weight in Germany from their power, rank, or riches? Was it not even hinted that the emperor of Austria had implored the favour, without being able to obtain it, of admission to the conferences of Erfurt?[1] This report was most improbable, for, after such an affront, the Emperor of Austria never could have sent Baron de Vincent to Erfurt with a letter full of the most flattering compliments to the Emperor of the French; but the credulity with which such rumours were accepted gives an idea of the haughty tone of omnipotence adopted at Erfurt by the two arbiters of Europe. By the side of those powerful ones of the earth rejoicing in their subjection, and proud to be the courtiers of the king of kings, what could the poor conspirators of the *Tugendbund* and of the *Teutschbund* effect? Nor could there be any harm in leaving them in their cellars in peace, and letting them exhale their mystic love of Grand *Teutonia* —a metaphysical abstraction worthy of a like chimerical worship!

And soon a worse defection followed, for the kings of intellect came in their turn to bow down before Cæsar. Goethe and Wieland were presented to Napoleon; they appeared at his court, and by their glory adorned his triumph. German patriotism was severely tried at Erfurt; but it may be said that of all its humiliations the one which the Germans most deeply resented was that of beholding their greatest literary genius decking himself out with Napoleon's favours. The men of Goethe's generation

[1] This fact, stated rather lightly by Lucchesini, Bignon, and many other historians, is in reality founded only on an equivocal declaration contained in a report of M. de Champagny (dated March 2, 1809) which attributes the following words to Metternich: 'No doubt, if the Emperor had been willing to admit the Emperor, my master, to Erfurt, or if he had only allowed me to go there, as I proposed. . . .' It is very likely that Metternich asked this authorisation only for himself, and that they feared his clear-sightedness too much to grant it to him.

always bore him ill-will for his conduct towards Napoleon; the present one has shown more indulgence, and in our days transcendental criticism almost looks upon this as one of his claims to glory. It beholds in it the sign of a serenity wellnigh divine, of an impartial mind superior to the petty contests of this nether world. Goethe himself has taken care not to adopt this tone of pathos; it were unjust to make him responsible for it. In his conversations with Eckermann he limits himself to pleading extenuating circumstances, and it is more than probable that he would have accepted the reveries of his apologists only with a Mephistophelean smile. The justification which he himself gave was far more modest. Generalising the reproach that had been addressed to him, he examines with evident emotion,—beneath which ill-suppressed remorse is very perceptible,—whether he could and ought to have adopted, in favour of his oppressed country, the noble and militant action of Kœrner, Arndt, and Rückert. Far from alleging the existence of any absolute incompatibility between the *rôle* of poet and that of citizen, he excuses himself on account of his being sixty instead of twenty years of age, and no longer capable of feeling or expressing warlike passions; to which it may be added that Goethe was still in many respects a man of the *ancien régime*, and that he held a place about the court of the Grand-Duke of Weimar,—an embarrassing circumstance even for an Olympian. 'How,' he says, 'could I have taken up arms without hatred? and how could I have hated without youth? If this event had happened in my twentieth year, I should not have been the last. . . . Moreover, we cannot all serve our country in the same manner; every one does his best according to where God has placed him. I have given myself trouble enough during half a century. . . . I never allowed myself any recreation; I never rested night or day; I always marched in front, always tried to act, and always acted, as best I could. If every one can say as much, then all will be right.'[1]

[1] *Conversations with Goethe*, translated by Delérot, v. 2. See also his *Entretien* with Laden in 1813.

An admirable apology and worthy of this great mind, so superior to his miserable school. The question thus stated sounds most plausible, for it does not pretend to attribute merit, nay almost virtue, to natural inaptitude. Certain it is, that a genius of this order renders as great service to mankind by producing works which honour and raise the human mind, as by enrolling himself in the most legitimate insurrection. He who pays his debt as a thinker may be dispensed from paying it as a soldier. But the very fact of invoking this species of exoneration is an acknowledgment that he would be greater who could perform the two tasks simultaneously. Moreover, mark well how this skilful pleader, who seeks to excuse absence and neutrality, pronounces no absolution on connivance. It may be well to dispense the poet from acting the part of patriot, but not from having the sentiments of a patriot, unless he is to descend to the lowest rank of virtuoso. Now Goethe, coming to salute Napoleon, and receiving from him the decoration of the Legion of Honour, in presence of humbled Germany, could neither be indifferent nor simply curious; he performed acts of adherence; he abandoned that attitude of passive resignation beneath which he says that he wished to take refuge; he dealt a painful blow to those who were preparing to fight for the deliverance of their country. He has himself, in a circumstantial note, described the flattering reception which Napoleon gave him. After having observed him silently for some moments the Emperor said, '*You are a man, Monsieur de Goethe!*' No doubt the eulogium was great and well merited. But, whilst acknowledging that Goethe was truly a man in the highest acceptation of the term, it must be added that in this circumstance he was nothing but a chamberlain.

The theatrical effect which Napoleon had in view in this solemn show at Erfurt having once been produced, his principal object was attained, for the political questions which remained for settlement with Alexander could not raise any serious difficulty. In view of the immediate and certain cession of two such important provinces as those of Wallachia and Moldavia, the Czar, without much trouble,

renounced that division of the Ottoman Empire with which he had been tantalised for more than a year. Alexander the more readily agreed to acquiesce in this new arrangement, that the equivalent asked in exchange for a gain so invaluable to him was far less than that demanded at Tilsit. He bound himself, it is true, by the Treaty of Erfurt, to continue his co-operation with Napoleon in the war against England (Article 2), and, should it so befall, also against Austria (Article 10); but the affairs in Spain threw every attack upon England into the background; and as to the eventuality of a war against Austria, the conditions were laid down in such vague general terms that the mode and measure of the assistance promised by Alexander were left very much at his own discretion. He engaged only 'to *declare* himself against Austria, should Austria enter upon war with France.' France, on her side, undertook to make common cause with Russia should Austria endeavour to oppose the occupation of the Principalities. The only very distinct engagement which the treaty imposed on Alexander was the recognition of 'the new order of things established by France in Spain;' but who does not see that, far from imposing any sacrifice upon him, this engagement could only overpower him with joy? It proved, in fact, that this war in Spain, the cause of all our embarrassments at that period, and which neutralised our influence in Europe, was about to be pursued and to end in tying up our hands. In exchange for two provinces which the Sultan could not keep from him, the Czar made over to us a country in revolt, a volcano in eruption, which would annihilate our troops and perpetuate our embarrassments. This fatal gift, which Alexander offered us with so much grace, could cause him but one regret, that of not having more such countries to offer us.

The Treaty of Erfurt was to be accompanied, like that of Tilsit, by a proposal of peace made to England on the basis of the *uti possidetis*. This arrangement gave rise to a short debate, which is too characteristic to be passed over in silence. The peace proposed to England having, as one of its first conditions, her preliminary consent to the estab-

lishment of Napoleon in Spain and Portugal, and that of Alexander in Finland and the Principalities, 'the high contracting parties' could not but see that their offer ran great risk of not being even listened to. Napoleon proposed to avoid this difficulty by postponing all notification to Turkey on the subject of the Principalities, until the answer of the British Cabinet should have been received. Once, said he, let England have decided in favour of peace; once let one of those strong currents of opinion have been created which then become law to the Government, she will have advanced too far to retreat, she will be forced to consent to everything, and Alexander may then without risk unmask his designs by breaking with Turkey. If, on the contrary, this rupture were to take place prematurely, 'when the news reached England that such a power shared her interests it would render her more exacting.'[1]

Never did the faithless negotiator of the Treaty of Amiens, and of so many other transactions violated as soon as concluded, display more clearly the processes of his perfidious diplomacy. But Alexander had too much penetration not to perceive that the proposed adjournment was a two-edged sword which might strike Russia as well as England. If Napoleon, in fact, came to an agreement with the British Cabinet, what guarantee had Alexander that this adjournment might not become a lasting one? Had he not already been deceived after receiving the most formal promises? And if Napoleon was so anxious to keep on good terms with England, might he not himself postpone his projects against Spain, since they were so hateful to that power? Alexander consequently ordered his minister Romanzoff to remain inflexible, and his obstinacy succeeded. 'Romanzoff wishes that everything should be precise,' wrote Champagny to his master. 'He will more willingly consent to a delay of a fixed period. The vague nature of the Tilsit articles, he said, has done us much harm; an army has been lost, and, so far, that is the only result of our alliance with you. . . . *The sentiment which pervaded every word was that of distrust; distrust*

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, Oct. 8, 1808.

of events, distrust also of our intentions.' Such in reality was the touching harmony that reigned between the two friends who had come to embrace each other at Erfurt.

While their ministers were struggling to find some literary artifice whereby, well or ill, to conceal their disagreements, the two sovereigns continued to lavish upon each other every mark of the most lively affection. They could no longer live apart. They showed themselves together everywhere,—at the theatre, at the promenade, at the chase. It should be well understood by the entire world that they had become inseparable. As to the rather unflattering matters lurking in the depths of their hearts, it was the two ministers who spoke of them to each other. Thanks to that wise expedient everything passed off harmoniously, and the sovereigns were able to appear in public with countenances beaming with mutual sympathy. Every one knows how Alexander, during the representation of Œdipus, applied those famous lines to Napoleon :

'The friendship of a great man is a benefit from the gods.'

After all, the Principalities were well worth a compliment, and Alexander obtained them in the end, without the restrictive clause which his ally desired to insert in the treaty. He likewise obtained the remission of twenty millions for Prussia, in exchange for a promise not to take any further interest in Italy or Hanover. Nor was Napoleon more successful in a negotiation of a very different nature which he commissioned Talleyrand to carry on with the Czar. After having for some time indulged the hope that he might be spontaneously offered what he was longing to ask, and almost irritated at not being understood, Napoleon at length confided to Talleyrand the delicate mission of sounding the Czar on the subject of a family alliance. He was obliged at length to confess the secret of his ambition, his project—so often denied—of repudiating Josephine! Alexander had a sister, the Grand-Duchess Catherine, who, according to the report of her contemporaries, was not only accomplished, but gifted with an exceptionally superior intellect. To quote only a single witness,

General Moreau, who saw her constantly in 1813, speaks of her in his private correspondence as the most remarkable woman he had ever known. It was upon her that Napoleon had cast his eyes. The overture was made with that exquisite tact which he had a right to expect from Talleyrand, and Alexander received it in the most gracious manner possible. But the communication was most embarrassing to him, for while on one side he was afraid of offending a man from whom he expected so many advantages, on the other he did not wish to impose either upon his people, upon his family, nor, in fine, upon his sister, an alliance which he knew would be odious to them, and for which even he himself felt very little sympathy. He skilfully steered clear of all these difficulties by alleging the necessity of overcoming his mother's opposition,—the decided enemy of French influence, and absolute sovereign in the bosom of her family. He expressed the most flattering regrets to Napoleon, thanked him cordially for the honour he wished to do the Imperial House of Russia, even manifested a hope of being able at some future day to arrange to their mutual satisfaction a union which was the dearest wish of his heart :—but Napoleon obtained nothing more. Like a wise man, Talleyrand took advantage of these matrimonial confidences to marry his nephew Edmund de Périgord to the duchess of Courland, a relative to the Czar.[1] And that union was the chief visible result of the labours of French diplomacy at Erfurt.

[1] Meneval, *Souvenirs historiques.*

END OF VOL. III.

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